

AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH

SOCER

VOL. 23 No. 1133 — TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003



• REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST
• PUBLICATIONS NO. NBQ5726

WEEKLY

\$3.60
GST INCLUSIVE

FINAL SERIES SHOCKS

(BELOW) Action shown between Dylan Macallister (Left) and Troy Halpin (Right) during the Spirit v Olympic clash. (Photo By Con Peulos).

(RIGHT) Smiles all round as Power goalscorer Ahmad Elrich shown celebrating with Michael Beachamp in Parramatta's two-one victory over the Glory.



By Mark Stavroulakis

Favourites Olympic Sharks and Perth Glory were dealt with a massive blow to their finals chances over the weekend as both sides crashed to defeats from both the Northern Spirit and Parramatta Power.

This year's Premiers the Olympic Sharks kicked off their Finals campaign with a loss to the Force and continued its losing streak with a three-one loss at home to the Northern Spirit.

Lee Sterrey's squad started off in the best possible way scoring first through Franco Parisi however the Spirit got on with the job scoring three times thanks to goals from Noel Spencer, John Hutchinson and one from former Sharks striker Dylan Macallister to gift coach Lawrie McKenna his first three points of the finals campaign.

"Olympic hammered us in the first 20 minutes and we were shaky and during the match the Sharks could have scored five goals," Northern Spirit coach Lawrie McKenna said.

While losing coach Sterrey stated to the press that "They upended us many times tonight and we never put one of them on the park."

Parramatta Power recorded its second victory in a row thus joining the front-runners of the series with an overwhelming two-one victory over last year's Grand-Finalists Perth Glory.

Goals from Damien Brown and in-form makeshift striker Ahmad Elrich condemned the Glory to its first loss of the final series

campaign.

The loss has seen D'Avray's men stranded on six points.

The Perth coach took the result on the chin.

"I've no real complaints. We came to Sydney two weeks ago to play Marconi and we didn't perform," he said.

"There's a right way and a wrong way to lose and maybe today we lost the right way."

Finally, the Adelaide City Force again proved that they have what it takes to match it with the big guns after defeating the struggling Newcastle United side three-two.

In an enthralling match, it was Force's Kiwi international Shane Smeltz who grabbed the plaudits for a remarkable match by bagging a brace, one coming in the dying stages of the game to gift Zoran Matic the three precious points.

"If we play like that next week (away to Perth Glory) we'll get destroyed," Matic stated.

The ladder has now unfolded into a dog-fight between four sides evenly matched with six points a-piece, with the Spirit and Newcastle making up the six.

Newcastle coach Ian Crook has had a rather disruptive season having had problems with injuries and suspensions but hope to put some points on the ladder this week against the struggling Olympic Sharks.

In other round 3 clashes, the Force travel to the West to take on the Glory while an all Sydney derby will see the Spirit take on Parramatta.

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• Full Euro 2004 Wrap

pages 29-30

HOMEART TAKES CHARGE OF THE FINALS SERIES



Remo Nogarotto Soccer Australia Chairman, Aart Van Roest Managing Director Homeart and George Frame CEO of Expo Channel sign a sponsorship deal before the Parramatta Power vs Perth Glory NSL finals series Soccer match at Parramatta Stadium in Sydney. (Read story on page 2).

ABSW EXCLUSIVE - EDDIE McGUIRE

ABSW's Daniela Raco last week took the time out in interviewing Collingwood President and TV Show host of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire', Eddie McGuire.

Speaking about his life in the fast lane, his precious AFL club, his close relationship with Socceroo Mark Viduka and whether AFL and soccer can both co-exist in Australia, this intriguing interview is a must read.



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**AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH
SOCCER**
WEEKLY

Issue No. 1133
Published every Tuesday by
F.L. Press
1/9 Glebe Point Road,
Glebe, NSW. 2037

TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9660 2033

(advertising)
John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)

ABSW's E-mail:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9660 5736 or 9660 7324

MAILING ADDRESS
1/9 Glebe Point Road,
Glebe, NSW. 2037

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9660 2033
Australia: \$195 (GST incl.)
Overseas: \$255 (GST incl.)

EDITOR
Mark Stavroulakis
STAND-IN STAFF WRITER
Peter Damalas

LAYOUT/TYPESETTING
Mary Quartly, Alamita Vea
PICTURE EDITOR
Carlos Furtado

CORRESPONDENTS
Alan Clark (Victoria)
Allan Crisp (Adelaide)
Glenn Davis (Brisbane)
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Stuart Jones (Sydney)
Daniela Raco (Victoria)
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SCANNING
Bill Hawthorn
FILM PLANNING
Nick Phillips
PHOTOGRAPHY
Getty Images

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Glebe NSW 2037,
Tel: (02) 9660 2033

VICTORIA:
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Deadline for contributions, articles
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aussiesabroad

Harry Kewell will end speculation linking him with a big-money departure from Leeds by signing a new contract 'in the next few weeks'. The Australian's current deal expires at the end of next season, and fears have been growing among the club's beleaguered supporters that he could be the latest in a long line to quit Elland Road.

in the environment he is in. Since Peter Ridsdale has been there Harry has had his contract upgraded three times.

"That is why there is the degree of trust there and I would say loyalty from Harry because the club has done the right thing by him in the past. The way things stand Harry's future will be resolved in the not-too-distant future."

told by Southampton that they will not be getting new deals at the end of the season and the pair have been reluctantly released and wished good luck in their future careers.

Southampton Academy Director Huw Jennings explained on www.saintsfco.co.uk: "It is fair to say that Scott's loan at Huddersfield [earlier this season] did not work out the way we had hoped. Scott was disappointed not to be given the opportunity to play in a natural striking role and unfortunately his progress has been severely hampered.

"The Premiership is becoming faster and more powerful all the time and standards are rising sharply. We felt it would be difficult to guarantee him a future here."

"I am sure both lads will have a strong prospect of scoring goals in the lower leagues and they will add value to whichever club takes them."

"With their contracts running out it was only fair to let them go now and give them chance to find another club and I hope they both bounce back strongly" said Jennings.

★★★

Leeds midfielder Harry Kewell has hailed former Elland Road boss Terry Venables as the best manager he has ever played under.

Venables was sacked by Leeds earlier this month as the club continued to struggle in the Premiership.

But Kewell, in an interview given before Venables' departure, claimed that in spite of bad results, the former England and Australia coach had had a huge influence on his career. The Australian told the club's official magazine, *Leeds, Leeds, Leeds*: "Terry has done wonders for me. I was going through a bad patch, but he picked up my game and brought me back out of it. "He is the best manager I have had so far. He brings out the best in me."

★★★

Scott McDonald is one of two Southampton players who has moved to Nationwide Division Three club Bournemouth. The Cherries had a look at both McDonald and Brian Howard in their reserves match away to Leyton Orient with McDonald scoring twice in the 3-3 clash and impressed O'Driscoll so much that he earned himself a short term contract with the club.

The Saints duo have both been



Scott McDonald: The former Southampton striker has secured a short term deal with Bournemouth.

But Kewell's agent Bernie Mandic says his player has no intention of following the likes of Rio Ferdinand, Robbie Fowler and Jonathan Woodgate out of the club.

And in a boost for put-upon Peter Ridsdale, Mandic says the chairman's fair treatment of Kewell is a big factor in the winger's decision to stay put. "We're in the process of discussing the future, things are going well and we'll have something sorted within the next few weeks.

"He's always been quite happy

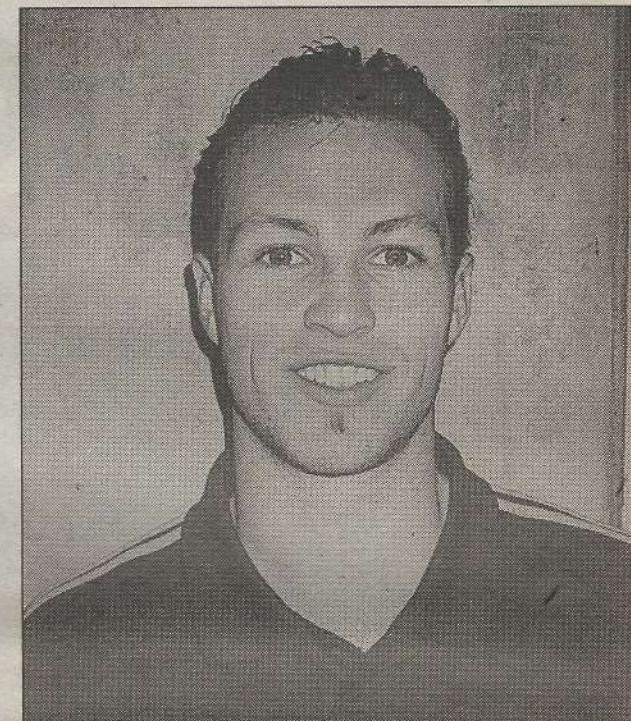
the **HOMEART** NSL Championship Series. In association with Soccer Australia and the Expo Channel, the Homeart sponsorship will allow for live televised NSL action each weekend on the Expo Channel via the Optus cable and satellite service (Channel 47) and regional AustraPay TV (Channel 19).

Soccer Australia Chairman Remo Nogarotto was pleased to formally accept the sponsorship on behalf of Soccer Australia.

"This sponsorship is important on two counts - it allows much needed television broadcasting of our product after a very difficult year in terms of the electronic media," he said. "Secondly the sponsorship allows for the winner of the Grand Final to be presented with an additional bonus payment of \$50,000 for winning



"All the time he has known me, he has always picked me up



Lucas Neill: Has confirmed Newcastle's interest in him.

front - and I appreciate that.

"I love playing up front. I always thought I could do a job there and he gave me the go-ahead to do it."

Kewell has been out of action for most of the month due to a back injury but is due to return to training with caretaker boss Peter Reid next week.

Lillestrom have taken Shane Stefanutto on trial from Brisbane Strikers.

Stefanutto, who possesses an Italian passport, has previously had unsuccessful trials with Parma and Molde.

The Norwegian side already

have one Aussie in their books in the shape of Kasey Wehrman, whilst South African Emile Baron is also with the side.

"This is a player that we're looking at for the future. It's his agent Lars Petter Fosdahl that has paid for him, so we have no expenses," said Lillestrom boss Arne Erlandsen to Romerikes Blad.

Stefanutto have played in over 100 games for The Strikers during a five-year spell with the club.

★★★

Blackburn Rovers fullback Lucas Neill has confirmed that interest in him from Newcastle United "is genuine".

Neill was linked with an £8 million double deal involving teammate David Dunn to Newcastle earlier this month.

He told the Sydney Morning Herald, "The Newcastle interest is not just a rumour, it's genuine."

"But I'm not sure I'm ready to rock the boat just yet. I'm talking to Blackburn at the moment about extending my contract an extra two years, even though I've still got two years left on my existing deal. Newcastle could be a progressive step, but then again it might not."

"My gut feeling is that I should stay around and be part of it."

"The most important thing is to make sure that there is a significant amount of coverage on television," he said. "The interest that the Expo Channel has already received from both viewers and other networks has been outstanding."

Homeart's Managing Director Aart van Roest was also present and speaking as the founder of the Homeart network which features more than 160 stores Australia-wide.

"We are very very proud to be associated with soccer," he said. "To me soccer is the game of the future with huge numbers playing soccer."

George Frame, Chief Executive Officer of the Expo Channel expressed his pleasure at the level of interest shown in the coverage to date.

The company as a whole is involved in selling goods to 'make your house a home', through Company stores, Franchised stores, the Web, and Mail Order.

HOMEART TAKES CHARGE OF THE FINALS SERIES

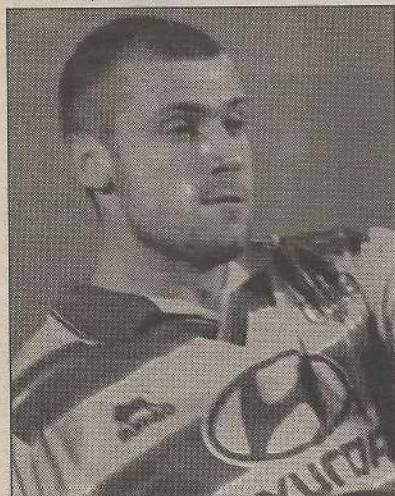
Continued from Front Page.

The National Soccer League last Sunday confirmed the naming rights sponsor for the 2002/03 NSL Homeart Championship Series. The contract documents were formally exchanged at a media conference which was televised on the Expo Channel as part of the station's live coverage of the Parramatta Power Vs Perth Glory match.

As such the ten-round championship series will be known as

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ABSW TO ANNOUNCE PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Fernando Rech: Won ABSW's Player of the Year for season 2001/02.

ABSW's panel of experts will in these next few weeks analyse the performances of various National League players throughout the season and will vote on who will be this year's ABSW NSL Player of the Year.

Not giving too much away at this stage, this season's competition has been a tough one to choose from with many outstanding youngsters making their debuts in Australia's elite league.

A number of high profile players from various clubs across Australia have already been penned in as possible candidates for claiming the award of being the best player in the NSL.

Soccer Australia will of course award their own awards at the end of the finals series which includes Coach of the Year, Player of the Year, U21's Player of the Year etc.

Last year's winner Fernando Rech had a rather quiet season so don't expect a repeat for the Brazilian midfielder.

SIPKA STAYS AS BLUE EAGLES COACH

By Allan Crisp

Adelaide Blue Eagles players and supporters can thank the negotiation skills of club chairman Rep Giordano for the retention of super coach Dragan Sipka.

Sipka shocked the Blues players after his team had lost the third round Premier League game 0-2 to Croydon Kings by telling them that he would no longer be coaching the team.

Eagles chairman Rep Giordano and his committee were stunned by the sudden turn of events when they heard that Sipka had made the announcement to his players in the dressing room.

But during a hastily arranged meeting on Friday morning Giordano convinced Sipka to remain in the job.

"Dragan was hit from two fronts because his wife rang him to say he should stay in

Adelaide," the delighted chairman said.

"We reassured Dragan that we would do our utmost to strengthen the squad by signing a couple of experienced players and by trying to recruit young players he can nurture for the future."

Long serving Blues chief Giordano said Sipka made his original decision to quit because he believed the players were not responding to his methods, particularly in the match against Croydon Kings.

The vastly experienced Sipka came to Australia earlier this year to assist his friend Zoran Karadzic in conducting junior clinics and to accept the senior Blue Eagles coaching position.

Karadzic, who coached the Eagles to five championships from nine seasons in charge, stepped down in favor of Sipka this season.

The latter was an outstanding player with FC Zemun Belgrade, FC Cukaricki Belgrade and FC

Teleoptic before coaching Teleoptic for 20 years and being appointed Under 19 National coach of Yugoslavia.

Karadzic said he was aware that Sipka was disappointed that he was unable to extract more from the players.

"The man is a maestro among coaches and his training sessions are absolutely brilliant," Karadzic said.

Giordano echoed the sentiments of his former coach Karadzic saying, "Dragan Sipka is a huge asset to the club and it would have been a tremendous set back had he decided to leave."

Despite losing Premier League top goalscorer and State team captain Michael Brooks and SA team mates Corey Artone, Frank Sergi, Vas Parhas and Marcin Kierno, the Eagles under Sipka qualified for the Bianco Summer Night Series grand final, losing 0-2 to MetroStars.

Paul Pezos from Galaxy

was a significant Blues signing, while experienced defender Don Deleso came to the rescue by reversing a decision to retire.

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Power sale still on

The Parramatta Leagues Club has said it will sell its NSL franchise, Parramatta Power, no matter what the team does during the competition's finals series.

Power coach Nick Theodorakopoulos had hoped the Leagues club might reconsider its decision to sell the franchise after the team's positive start to the finals.

"The (leagues) club has in principle agreed to sell after next year but I'm hoping that with some results they will at least hold a meeting to reconsider," Theodorakopoulos told AAP.

"But they've also said if things continue the way they have in Australian soccer then there's no way they will change their mind."

But chief executive Denis Fitzgerald said that a good finals campaign would be more likely to increase the likelihood of a sale.

"We've been losing money on it every year since the beginning so the

sale will mean an end to the financial losses," Fitzgerald said.

"Any success in the meantime will improve the value of the club and its players but if a buyer can't be found the Parramatta Power will cease to be."



Parramatta Leagues Chief Executive Denis Fitzgerald.

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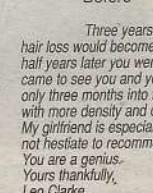


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Thank you Sam.

Yours Truly,

Steve James

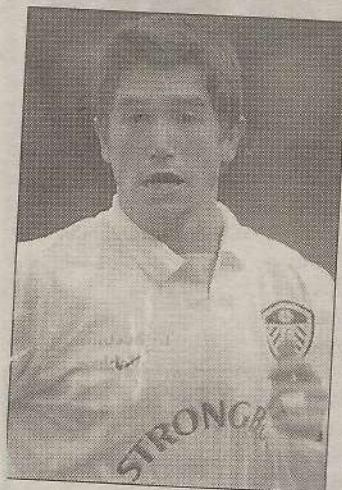
Three years ago you advised me on the way my hair was and how rapid my hair loss would become. I ignored your advice denying I was shedding hair. Two and a half years later you were correct, my girlfriend and I thought we should do something so I came to see you and you were more than happy to help me with your treatment. Still only three months into the treatment the improvement is dramatic. My hair feels thicker with more density and close friends often comment on how it looks to be growing back. My girlfriend is especially happy with how it is looking. I thank you undoubtedly and do not hesitate to recommend you to any person who is concerned about their hair loss.

You are a genius.

Yours faithfully,

Leo Clarke

Kewell's long-term outlook



Harry Kewell is set to commit with Premier League side Leeds United for next season.

Leeds forward Harry Kewell is set to commit his future to the Premiership strugglers in the next few weeks, according to his agent.

The Australian international is out of contract at the end of next season and has been linked with a

move away from Elland Road. But Kewell's agent Bernie Mandic has said talks have already started about a new deal - and has given Leeds fans hope that the 24-year-old will not be the next high profile departure.

Rio Ferdinand started the exodus with a move to Manchester United, and he was followed through the Elland Road exit door by Robbie Keane, Lee Bowyer, Olivier Dacourt, Robbie Fowler and Jonathan Woodgate.

But Mandic told the BBC Sport website: "We're in the process of discussing the future, things are going well and we'll have something sorted within the next few weeks.

"He's always been quite happy in the environment he is in. Since (chairman) Peter Ridsdale has been there Harry has had his contract upgraded three times.

"That is why there is the degree of trust there and I would say loyalty from Harry because the club has done the right thing by him in the past."

"The way things stand Harry's

future will be resolved in the not-too-distant future."

Despite the problems at Elland Road, Mandic said Kewell saw a bright future for the club.

The West Yorkshire side are currently only four points above the Premiership relegation zone, after winning just one of their last nine matches.

Manager Terry Venables was sacked and replaced last week by former Sunderland boss Peter Reid but Mandic continued: "I'm not distressed about the situation and more importantly Harry isn't.

"Football's a funny thing and what seems to be a disaster one day can be turned around.

"Don't get me wrong, Harry is not happy not winning matches and not playing in Europe, but that sort of stuff can happen in football.

"Too often people make short-term decisions - Harry's not into that and neither am I. I don't think the chairman is either.

"We're happy going about our business and the way things stand Harry's future will be resolved in the not-too-distant future."



Former Socceroo Craig Foster resigned from the PFA last week.

Foster resigns from PFA

conflict of interest.

His full statement follows:

This week I have officially resigned from my position as Deputy Chair of PFAM, the PFA's commercial arm.

I have done this for one major reason - to alleviate any potential inference of conflict of interest in my capacity as a soccer analyst with SBS, which requires me to pass commentary on the policies and direction of Soccer Australia and the game in general.

At a critical time in the game's history I recognise the responsibility to view and comment on the game from an objective viewpoint, and importantly to be seen as such.

I served proudly on the Executive Board of the PFA for four years, and as a director and deputy Chair of PFAM for over a year.

The PFA is an outstanding organisation boasting an honour

roll of former NSL and Socceroo stars such as Frank Farina, John Kosmina, Alex Tobin (current President), Kimon Taliadoris, Oscar Crino and others.

I have always declared my involvement with the Player's Association and have been careful to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

The Independent Inquiry into soccer will soon hand down its recommendations. Like most people who want the game to succeed I wait with great anticipation for the detailed findings of the report.

However regardless of the nature of the recommendations I take this opportunity of calling for every stakeholder to once and for all put aside personal and vested interests and act toward one goal, the ultimate good of Australian soccer.

Knights slam finals format

Melbourne Knights President Ange Cimera has blasted the National Soccer League's newly adopted 11-week Championship series.

This year the NSL adopted a play-off system similar to the one used in the Switzerland first division, with a 26-week home-and-away season played to decide the top six teams, which then play

each other twice more, at home and away.

After the 10 weeks of matches between the top six, the two teams that have accrued the most points then advance to play each other in the Grand Final, with the top team hosting it, but Cimera told the Herald Sun the system should be scrapped.

"There was nothing wrong with the knockout format, the change to

a league system makes a mockery of a finals system to decide the champion," Cimera said.

"It's a load of garbage - if they wanted more games, they should've just extended the season."

"If you were good enough to win two or three games, you made it to the grand final," he added of the old system.

"Now you're going to end up with a lot of dead rubbers within the first three weeks - you'll virtually be able to write off Northern Spirit after two rounds."

Cimera's South Melbourne counterpart Peter Mitrakas, who is also a member of the NSL policy review committee, says while the league is loathe to make more changes, the system's merits will nonetheless be discussed at a meeting on April 2.

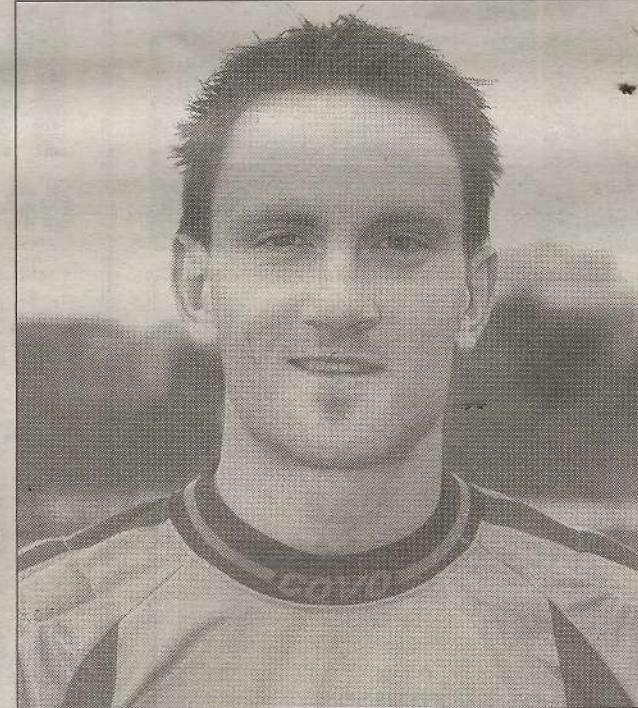
"As a rule, the committee wants as few changes as possible for next season because of the planned NSL revamp for the following season (2004-05)," Mitrakas said.

"The premise is that change would lead to more confusion, but if the (current) finals (system) are unsuccessful, there is no point sticking with them."

Meanwhile, Mitrakas declared that his club would support the application of another Melbourne club joining the NSL next season.

"My belief is if there is a good application and Melbourne Dragons meet all the criteria, why shouldn't they be entertained?" he said.

Galekovic signs two-year deal



South Melbourne's promising young custodian Eugene Galekovic has signed a new two-year deal with the club.

South Melbourne Soccer Club has secured its first signing of the pre-season. Inspiring goalkeeper, Eugene Galekovic has committed himself to the club, agreeing on a new two-year contract.

"This is fantastic news for the Club in our endeavour to re-sign players from our existing squad," Club President, Peter Mitrakas stated.

Twenty-year-old Galekovic played 15 matches this season, making giant strides and showing much potential and continued improvement. He established himself as a first team regular and gained valuable experience this

season.

The young keeper is delighted with his signing and looks forward to the next two seasons at Lakeside.

"I am delighted with the new deal and to be part of the immediate future of Australia's most successful soccer club. I believe the club will re-establish itself as a force within the League next season."

South Melbourne fans demand and deserve success and I confidently predict continued success is around the corner", says Galekovic.

"Playing regular football for South Melbourne will give me a

pathway to Socceroo representation. I hope to improve on my performances of last season, to attract the attention of Mr. Farina and be part of the Olyroos set up".

Young Socceroo coach Ange Postecoglou has taken notice of Galekovic's performances this season, as the young goalkeeper strives for National Team representation.

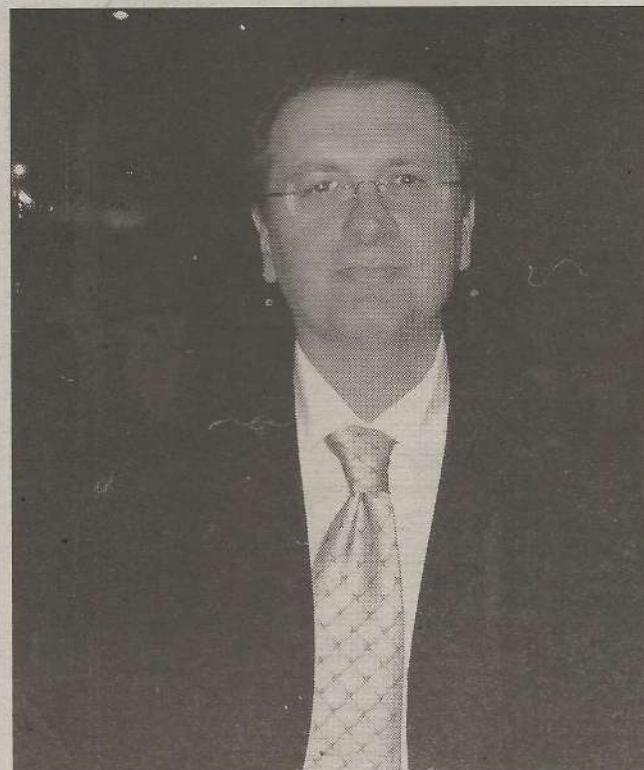
"Galekovic had a good year and was noticed by Frank Farina, myself and the National Team coaches. With the 2004 Olympics around the corner, he is certainly in contention and will need to be consistent next season", says Postecoglou.

South Melbourne's Football Operations Department will speak to classy midfielder Con Boutsianis next and will try to lock in a long-term deal with the enigmatic former Socceroo.

The Club is assembling a coaching selection committee to commence interviews for the vacant coaching position. Interviews will commence with a fortnight.

Football Operations Manager Manny Anezakis is predicting a busy period as the Club determines its new coach, continues the process of re-signing uncontracted players from its existing squad and looks to strengthen the squad upon the appointment of its new senior coach.

"We have placed an enormous priority on re-signing our players over the next two months. Galekovic is the first in a string of players and we are dedicated to promptly speaking to the entire squad", says Anezakis.



South Melbourne President Peter Mitrakas has stated that he will support another Victorian club joining the NSL next season.

NSL Finals Series - Round 3 Previews



NEWCASTLE UNITED-OLYMPIC SHARKS



By Peter Damalas

These teams remain the only two who have not recorded a win in the finals series after Round 2. The difference between the two is Olympic's six point buffer as a bonus for obtaining the minor premiership at the end of the regular season.

With rival top six sides Adelaide City, Parramatta Power and Perth Glory putting the pressure on the defending champions with wins in their opening fixtures, any advantage the Sydney club may have had has been removed as four teams have six points, three ahead of Northern Spirit, while Newcastle remain locked at the bottom with no points.

The way in which Olympic surrendered the lead to the Spirit on Sunday evening was puzzling for their supporters, who walked out immediately after Dylan Macallister's match clinching goal with fifteen minutes remaining.

Lee Sterrey was brought in with the purpose of 'toughening up' Olympic's image and reputation as a 'soft' team. But this last performance further empha-

sized that he is some way off achieving this mission.

While the midfield consisted of Tom Podeljak, Joel Porter and Troy Halpin, all highly skilled creators with goal scoring potential, there was in essence the lack of a belly to Olympic's midfield, and the squad is perhaps missing a quality midfield anchorman who can settle the team in the centre of the park.

Sterrey will attempt to impose a workmanlike attitude on his team, who no longer have the luxury of a head start. The finals dogfight may well inspire the team to fulfil its potential, something it has not done this season.

With George Souris, Paul Kohler, Wayne Shoj and Greg Owens challenging for places, there can be little room for complacency amongst the regular starting eleven, and there may be one or two changes in store for Friday

night's clash with Newcastle United at Energy Australia Stadium. Expect Ante Milicic to make his return to first team football after two weeks out with an injury. He returns to the scene of the infamous falling out with his teammates, when he demanded to be substituted by then coach Gary Phillips.

The former Young Socceroo will be looking to

silence the vocal Newcastle crowd as he did in last year's Preliminary Final.

The key words that Sterrey is likely to stress at training this week will be determination, pressing and ruthlessness. These characteristics were lacking against Northern Spirit.

Having coached Newcastle United in their inaugural NSL season two years ago, Sterrey's insider knowledge of this week's opponents may swing matters in Olympic's favour.

For Newcastle, their finals campaign looks increasingly shaky after successive losses.

Their narrow 3-2 loss away to Adelaide City was particularly painful as they conceded an injury time goal to Shane Smeltz.

Ian Crook's side will be desperate to convert positive starts into points. Newcastle have opened the scoring against both Parramatta and Adelaide City, but have been found wanting late in both games.

The fatigue caused by injuries to key members of the squad have not helped their cause throughout the season, and the loss of Steve Eagleton to a season ending injury, and also Peter Tskenis for most of the finals, have further stretched the Novocastrians,

depth.

But Newcastle have an impressive home record against Olympic which will boost their confidence this week.

The last match between the two, which procured a 2-1 result for the

Novocastrians, will be a positive reference point for the depleted squad.

This result was achieved without the services of a number of senior members of the team.

The goalscoring responsibility may well rest with Travis Dodd and Esala Masi. Second top NSL goalscorer, Joel Griffiths was unavailable due to injury last week and may yet make a claim for a starting berth.

While Newcastle's season may rest upon a result in this match, Olympic also cannot afford another slip-up. The ambitious club have a home grand final in their sights, and the likes of Perth and Adelaide may take that dream away from them.

This match will be a test of endurance as both United and Olympic tend to drop in intensity as a match wears on.



PERTH GLORY-ADELAIDE CITY FORCE



The NSL standings after the second week of finals action have further illustrated the closeness of the 2002/2003 title race. Few would have predicted Adelaide's rise into title contention midway through the season when coaching legend, Zoran Matic, was brought back into the fold for his third stint at the club following the resignation of Charlie Villani.

But the impact of the wily championship winner on the club has many competitors concerned. Adelaide City are well renowned finals experts, and two wins from two games have helped shorten the odds of them appearing in the Grand Final.

Enigmatic right winger, Goran Lozanovski (who scored the winner against Olympic) will operate in tandem with Lucas Pantelis on the left to provide City with solid penetration down

the flanks, while former Socceroo Aurelio Vidmar will be the creative spark in the middle.

The arrival of Italian trio, Gianluca Lagati and Diego Pellegrini in defence, and Claudio Pelosi in attack, have given the young team some added experience and class, and they will be called upon against the Glory.

Perth have a unique link to Adelaide City, with former players Damian Mori, Jason Petkovic and Brad Hassell now a vital part of Mich d'Avray's plans.

This season's top goalscorer, Damian Mori, will return from a two match suspension to haunt his former teammates at Perth Oval on Saturday. While Perth have lost their past two games in Sydney, to Marconi and Parramatta, at home they are impregnable, as Northern Spirit found out in Round 1.

Mori will slot in up front, alongside strike

partner Bobby Despotovski, who scored four goals in the last home appearance. Without the services of the all-time leading NSL scorer, Perth are a much weaker side, and they struggled to overcome a resilient Parramatta defence.

In midfield, d'Avray can call upon German import, Andre Gumprecht, who was at the centre of the player registration debacle which cost the club three points and the minor premiership. Gumprecht has been one of the standout players in the National Soccer League, and will be up against former Socceroo, Aurelio Vidmar, in the centre of the park.

While the West Australian outfit blitzed the field in last season's campaign before falling at the final hurdle, the competition this season have proven to be a handful.

The extended finals format has so far indicated that Perth are indeed, not invincible.

They have replaced their relentless attacking style of play with a highly structured 4-4-2 system which relies on grounding out results with solid, rather than spectacular displays.

Consistency and organisation tend to be buzz words come finals time, and Mich d'Avray will hope his defence can do the job against the likes of Shane Smeltz, Scott Tunbridge and Claudio Pelosi this weekend.

While Zoran Matic is recognised as the master of finals psychology, Mich d'Avray's men have unfairly been described as 'Echokers'.

While the outcome of this fixture will certainly not eliminate one team from the equation, a positive result for the home team on Saturday night will help cast any lingering doubts aside.

ABSW prediction- DRAW.



NORTHERN SPIRIT-PARRAMATTA POWER



Parramatta are currently riding high on a wave of confidence as the finals enters Round 3. The Power knocked off Perth Glory at Parramatta Stadium on Sunday afternoon, and in the process, displayed a new quality that will no doubt put them in good stead as competition heats up.

For the Northern Spirit, the 3-1 victory away to Olympic Sharks has restored the faith after successive five goal hidings. Led by Scotsman Ian Ferguson, the midfield battled hard against a quicker outfit and defended stoutly for long periods.

Lawrie McKinna and Nick Theodorakopoulos are two of the most tactically aware coaches in the national league, and one will no doubt be awarded Coach of the Year.

The clash on Saturday will be a more closely fought contest than the Round 26

match, which ended 5-1 in favour of Parramatta.

The mean attacking machine assembled at great cost by Nick Theodorakopoulos simply destroyed their opponents on this occasion. Ahmad Elrich and John Buonavoglia continue to thrive as a new attacking combination, with Kosta Salapasis and Brad Maloney in support.

While his forwards have scored almost at will in the second half of the season, Theodorakopoulos has been especially pleased by the attitude and commitment shown in recovering from a goal down and defending a lead.

In consecutive weeks, Parramatta have been tested in trying circumstances and have come out on top both times.

At Newcastle, they conceded the first goal before rallying to defeat the home side 2-1, while the second half performance against

Perth indicated that the Power are capable of withstanding pressure from the premier attacking team in the country.

But the championship winner with Wollongong is not taking his team's rise into title contention for granted. Theodorakopoulos has been hard at work during the finals, and was spotted an hour after the conclusion of Parramatta's match at the other end of Sydney, to witness the next opponent, Northern Spirit in Cronulla.

Parramatta will have to play with intensity and rhythm to overcome the Spirit at North Sydney Oval.

The young team, driven on by veterans Alex Tobin and Ian Ferguson, stood firm against Olympic and seem to have turned the corner.

Dylan Macallister will compete with Adam Kwasnik, back from suspension, for a role up front, while Jonathan Richter, a speed

and mobility in attack, together with his determination to retrieve possession may convince McKinna to play him from the beginning.

The key match ups on the flanks and in the middle may decide the outcome of the match.

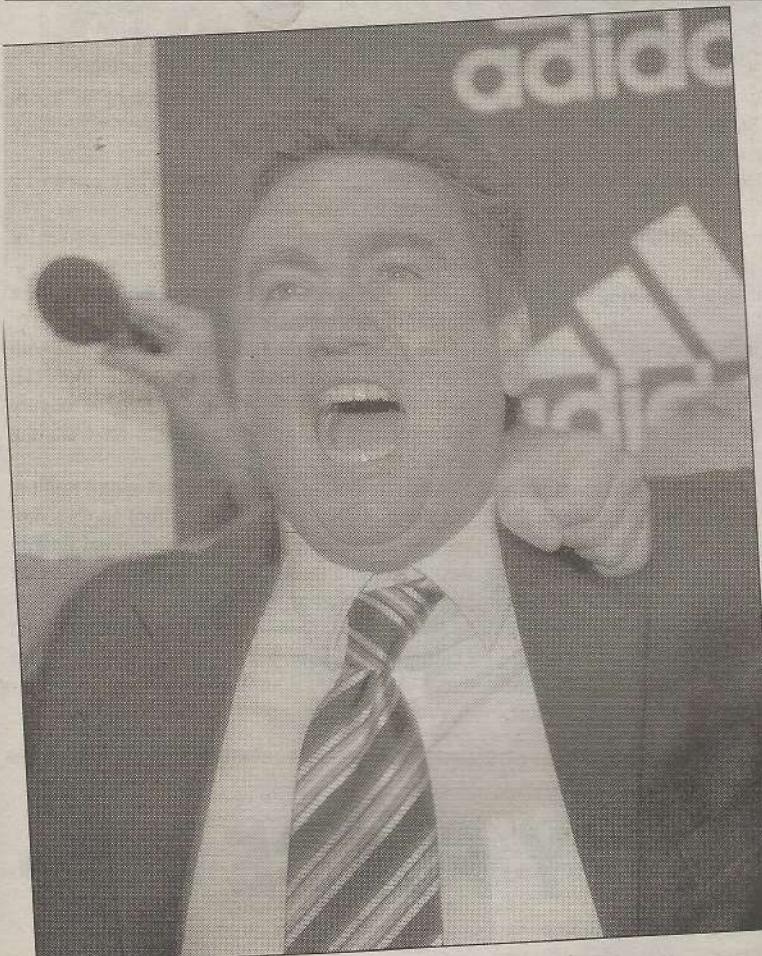
Fiery left-back, Vuko Tomasevic, will have the task of marking dangerman Elrich, while Damian Brown's goal against Perth warrants his selection ahead of Brendan Renaud on the left.

English born Wayne O'Sullivan will find in Scotsman Ian Ferguson a quality opponent, and the winner of this battle will set up a steady platform for his team.

While Parramatta have won a record five matches in a row, Spirit are capable of springing a surprise, as their last result proves.

ABSW prediction- PERTH GLORY.

EDDIE McGUIRE FOOTBALL SUPREMO



All smiles as McGuire celebrates a victory with the 'Pies.'



By Daniela Raco

They are the biggest. They are the loudest. They are the noisiest. **EDDIE McGUIRE** is the President of one of the most famous sporting clubs in Australia – The Collingwood Football Club. The mild-mannered, Versace-suited football club president is regarded as one of the most influential men in Australian Rules football.

Eddie McGuire probably has “more on his plate” than any other Australian media personality. McGuire’s influence would come as a mystery to many Sydney viewers, who would know him as the host of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*?

If you live in Victoria, Australia’s most parochial sporting city, it is pretty hard not to bump into “Eddie Everywhere” as he’s known.

Eddie reached the pinnacle of AFL Television journalism in his time as a sports news hound with Channel Nine and Channel Ten. Success came in February, 1994 when he made the transition to TV celebrity – with Channel Nine’s *The Footy Show*.

Now entering its tenth season, The

Footy Show, which also features Sam Newman and Trevor Marmalade, is one of the most successful local programs of all time. It is as unique as it is successful.

In 1999 Eddie undertook probably his biggest challenge – to help resurrect the Collingwood FC. The Collingwood football jumper is said to bring in 70% more dollars than any other AFL team. It is the people’s club. Eddie likes nothing better than to hear the Magpies roar at the MCG.

He is the man with the Midas touch. In a life that is one of Australia’s most crowded and most public, many wonder how far Eddie McGuire can take his Napoleon like march across media and business.

Eddie is probably one of the busiest people in the known universe, and let

me tell you it was no easy feat to arrange this interview! Eddie’s assistant, Lisa and I are on a first-name basis now. In an ABSW exclusive I go one-one with this media personality extraordinaire.

DR: How seriously do Victorians take their football?

I think everybody in the world takes their football very seriously, whether it’s Australian Rules football, Rugby Union, Rugby League, or Soccer. It’s a passion that everyone gets involved in – a real outlet to go to express yourself and feel part of a community – these days more than ever. Now that organized religion is not as strong as it used to be, I think there are more and more people finding their identity through their football club.

DR: When you took over the Collingwood presidency at the end of 1998, the club had finished the season in 14th position. Worse still, it had debts of more than \$1 million. Within three seasons you brought the Magpies from the bottom to the top. Almost. How did you build and maintain a successful sporting club?

The first thing you have to do is look and find out whether you actually stand for anything. There are plenty of products on the shelves these days and it’s very much a consumer society. If you want people to feel emotion and passion for an organization, it has to stand for something other than, in our case, 22 young blokes running around being paid a lot of money to chase a ball of air.

I came in and I had certain thoughts on what the Collingwood Football Club should stand for and what it used to stand for and we worked through them with our key people – which is our supporters and our players. We then started to recruit players that would be able to enhance our club in the way that we wanted to go forward. Everyone is welcome at Collingwood – and welcome to the Big Time.

We play the biggest games, we have the biggest crowds, we play at the MCG, and



Eddie shown on “The Footy Show” with Harry Kewell and good friend Mark Viduka.

people of all socio-economic backgrounds can come to our games every week and get in for the minimum price if they want to.

There are memberships for those who are down on a quid or multi-millionaires. We changed our philosophy and became leaders in the stamping out of racial vilification.

In the meantime we are the first sporting club in Australia to have a Gay supporters group; we have women’s groups, etc. You have to decide what you stand for. For me, Collingwood stood for something other than just a game of football on a Saturday afternoon.

MG: What leadership qualities do you look for in your off-field group?

You need to get people who are like-minded in their approach to things. There is no point in putting people in who are pulling in different directions. You do have to provide leadership. What that sometimes means is backing off and letting people do their job.

The first three appointments I made have been the three most significant ones that I made all the way through (Neil Balme – director of football, Michael Malthouse - coach, Greg Swan - CEO).

These guys work just as hard on day one as they do towards the end of the week. People like this are professionally proud of their own position in life, and want to build on that. Some people need a stick, some people need a carrot. What’s

important is that everyone is committed to the cause.

DR: You came to within 9 points of Grand Final glory. Can you describe the heartache?

It was extremely disappointing obviously to come so close. Having said that, it was another year going forward. In any one particular year, there is only one Premiership team, but I think there are plenty of others who could say they have had a good season.

The re-establishing of the Collingwood Football Team was fantastic, but bigger than that was the re-establishing of the Collingwood Football Club as being not only a professional team on the ground, but being the best value for money for its sponsors, being the number one in TV ratings, number one for attendances around the country, number one for internet hits, number one for marketing, etc.

These things are very positive and we will continue to grow.

DR: How important is it to win to keep your supporters?

That’s what it’s about. It’s also important that you set your club up for the time when you’re not winning, which is inevitable.

Your club must mean something other than just a game of football. It’s a way of ensuring against the downtimes. The competition has a salary cap and a draft mechanism – and there will be downtimes.

The clubs that are best equipped to get through these times will quickly get to the top again.

DR: You have been quoted as* saying that “Collingwood is a team of the people for the people”. How fundamental are corporate activities and family days in appeasing both your people, and your business?

We could easily be playing at a ground that has a capacity where we would be locking them out every week, but we don’t – we play at the MCG.

In the true economic sense it’s probably the wrong ground to be playing on because anybody can get in.

But we decided to open ourselves up not just for those people who can afford to buy membership, or our rank and file supporters, but those who can only afford to come every now and then.

Family days are absolutely vital in showing our supporters that it’s not just about reaping money out of their pockets every five minutes, but that the club belongs to them.

(Continue on Page 7)



McGuire (left) shown with good friend Sam Newman on “The Footy Show”.

EDDIE McGUIRE FOOTBALL SUPREMO

DR: What is your grand plan going forward?

World domination! We have some exciting times ahead at Collingwood. In the next twelve months we will be moving into a \$25million dollar state-of-the-art facility at Olympic Park, in the biggest sports precinct in Australia.

Within the next three years we will have a \$450million dollar stand redeveloped at the MCG with designated facilities for Collingwood supporters for home and away games.

We will have probably as good an infrastructure setup for our players, members, and supporters as any football club in the world.

DR: What is it that makes people either love or hate clubs like Manchester United and Collingwood?

I think it's the sense of passion. A lot of it is built along a similar ethos, whether it's Manchester United or Glasgow Celtic, Collingwood or Essendon. It's the strength of the club or passion of the supporters.

Some people perceive that if you're on the wrong side of the fence, that it's arrogance if you're winning. We have gone through the downturns in recent times, and opposition supporters of clubs that have been successful that haven't been able to engender the same kind of passion, just shake their heads and wonder - what is it about this club?

People like myself who have never lived within ten miles of the city of Collingwood have been affected by it. With soccer clubs around the world like United, there is as many people wearing shirts in Asia as there is in the shadows of Old Trafford. The supporters are made to feel part of something big.

Our Motto has been "WELCOME to the Big Time". With the "welcome" in capital letters and the "big time" is not necessarily pumping up our chests. It's the experience of being at a big ground, with a big crowd, with big things at stake.

DR: What's the difference between a fanatical AFL supporter and a passionate soccer supporter in Italy?

I you had of said passionate and passionate, I'd say "no different". It's the same feeling. Especially for someone like myself who was brought up with a soccer background, I'm as excited as Celtic getting through to the finals of the UEFA Cup as anyone else. That's probably why you see so many Australian Rules supporters involved in world soccer as well.

DR: The job of commenting can often be frustrating. Do you ever get the inkling to just run out on the park and kick the ball yourself?

(chuckle...). Not any more. You only have to be close enough to the action to see that it is not as simple as it would seem. If you get into the rooms after a team has been beaten and see the boys, you quickly come back down to earth and you realize they've given it their all and it's just the way the ball bounces sometimes.

DR: Rate your current-day AFL skills out of 10.

(chuckle...). I kick the ball pretty well.

Who wants to be a millionaire?

I've got good touch. But I've never played AFL. It's pretty hard for me to rate it. If I was any good, I would have played it. And I didn't when I was fit and young, so I'll just have to rate myself as the President these days.

DR: You call Mark Viduka "a good mate". Is your friendship based on a mutual love of Collingwood?

That's the touchstone, and the fact that he played at Celtic, and the fact that he is a Melbourne boy. It's not as if we ring each other often. But if Mark is in town and he comes to the football, he comes as my guest. He has been very generous with his time and support of Collingwood officials when they have visited him at either Celtic or Leeds.

He is a good man. He is like hundreds of thousands of people right around Australia who have an instant affinity with each other because they are Collingwood people.

DR: How do we promote soccer on a commercial channel?

It's like anything else. It's a matter of getting people to attend the games first and it builds from there.

DR: How has a successful show like "The Footy Show" managed to top the ratings despite not being allowed to show any football footage?

It's simple. As our song at the start of the Footy Show says "it's more than a game". That's the difference between people that follow sport, and people who are passionate about it. It's not just watching the highlights, or just watching the game live, it's all the other intricacies of a club.

We open the locker room door to a

whole generation of people who have never been able to get in that door. Football and sport in general these days is very regimented and there is not as much individual capacity to show flair on the field as there is off of it these days.

DR: In recent times, you launched a surprising attack on player managers on The Footy Show. You said that "if a player wanted a bigger slice of the footy industry pie, they should cut their costs by getting rid of agents". Can the same be said about Australian soccer?

I just said that there are not many player managers that do that much for their money.

In terms of soccer, I'm not in a position to say. But money in all sport is tight and at the Collingwood football Club, for example, we have full-time employees whose only job in life is to make sure the players are looked after. The AFL also puts millions of dollars into the Australian Football League Players Association whose job is also to make sure the players are looked after.

Then the players themselves have player-managers who they pay anything between 3-5% of their salary to do their contract and up to 20-25% of their salary for their commercial interests. There seems to be an awful lot of duplication and at the end of the day the footballers if they want more money in their pockets they should cut back on expenses and do a lot of this stuff themselves.

DR: What will it take for Australia to be World Soccer Champions?

(chuckle...). Get everyone playing the one sport, and we'll kill everyone! Imagine if we picked out the best available talent out of the three other codes, we'll

dominate world soccer forever. But that's not the case, and probably never will be.

Hopefully the boys will be able to get together a little bit more. It was interesting to see that when Frank Farina got a team together in England, as we saw in recent times, that they were able to go out and do so well. Frank Farina and Soccer Australia seem to be on the right course at the moment and we wish them all the best.

DR: Can Australian soccer find its rightful niche in Australian sport and co-exist with Australian Rules football?

I don't think there is any problem with co-existence. The answer to that would be "yes".

DR: What soccer league do you rate as the world's best?

The Scottish Football League!! Glasgow Celtic are about to win the UEFA Cup. Realistically, it's a lineball between Italy, Spain and England.



McGuire believes AFL can co-exist with Australian soccer.

DR: What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That they're greedy.

DR: What is the first thing you do when you arrive home?

I say hello to my family.

DR: If you uncorked a genie in a bottle, what would you wish for?

Another five wishes.

DR: How would you spend your last \$50?

Collingwood Membership.

Eddie's beloved AFL side, the Collingwood Magpies.

GLORY DUMPS TV COVERAGE

The Glory has dumped television coverage of its national soccer league finals games at Perth Oval after the club recorded its second smallest attendance ever in last Saturday's match against Northern Spirit.

In a tough opening finals weekend for Soccer Australia, the three matches drew just 12,717 fans, with only 6,437 turning up to watch the usually bankable Glory.

Glory chief executive Jeff Dennis said the club made the decision in consultation with Channel 7. Given the choice of a live broadcast or none at all, he said the club opted with the latter.

"There was a benefit to our sponsors and our country supporters in having a live telecast," Dennis said.

"We were led to believe a live telecast would take about 2,000 (people) off our gate - if that was the case we were prepared to go with the short term pain...but it was a lot more than that so this is the result."

In past seasons the Glory have regularly attracted in excess of 30,000 fans at finals games at Subiaco Oval.

While interest in the NSL has declined and the controversial extended finals format means fewer cutthroat games, Dennis said he had expected a crowd of about 10,000 against the Spirit.



Perth Glory want to see a return of their beloved fans during the new finals format.

He said poor weather and the beginning of hostilities with Iraq didn't help the crowd size, the club's small-

est since 6,299 people turned up for a match against Gippsland Falcons in the Glory's inaugural season

seven years ago. The bad news for SA this weekend is that two teams could be all but out of the

finals race after just two rounds of the ten-week competition.

Olympic is expected to down Northern Spirit at Toyota Park on Sunday and Adelaide go in a slight favourite over the injury-ravaged Newcastle at Hindmarsh.

Add in a Perth win over Parramatta at Parramatta Stadium on Sunday and that leaves the Glory and Olympic on nine points and United and the Spirit on zero.

Spirit coach Lawrie McKinna conceded his team would find it extremely difficult to stay in the finals hunt if it did not get any points from the weekend game.

"If you are nine points behind, psychologically it's a

big ask," McKinna said.

"The thing going for us is that anybody can beat anybody on their day."

SA tried to talk up the finals format, which is loosely based on the Swiss system, saying in 15 seasons teams from outside the top two had won the title six times.

But the Australian with NSL and Swiss league experience, Basel's Scott Chipperfield, had already cast doubt on whether it would be a success.

"I think it works in Switzerland because soccer has a bigger following, there would be a lot of uncertainties if it was introduced in Australia," Chipperfield said on his website.

NIGERIAN GOAL MACHINE SIGNS FOR FAWKNER

Former Nigerian Golden Boot Runner Up Chimaobi Nwaogazi has waited two years to be free to play football in Australia.

Last Sunday "Chima" took to the field for Fawkner Blues in the Victorian Premier League, as he begins to rebuild his career after a long wait, due to a greedy former club, procrastinating NSL outfits and immigration difficulties.

"I can't wait" said Nwaogazi. "I love Australia and I have made so many friends here" said the likeable player, who was once a part of the Nigerian international set up.

The drama all started two years ago when "Chima" and two of his mates, were flown to Australia as "free agents" by Olympic Sharks. "As soon as they hit Australian soil, the unlicensed agent representing them told the Sharks that each player had fifty grand U.S. on his head."

Eventually, Olympic lost interest" said

Nwaogazi's agent Chris Tanner. "This whole story exemplifies the benefits of why clubs and players should only deal with licensed agents" added Tanner.

After that, a mistakenly issued bridging visa, a three-month training stint with Ian Crook and Newcastle United, a contract offer from Crook scuttled by greedy demands from his former club, and disgraceful treatment by Marconi this season, has led the African star to the Blues.

"Like everywhere he has been, Chima has charmed the Fawkner club. He is such a gentleman, and he can play too," said Blues president Santo Rizza. "He is strong, fast, powerful in the air, and can score goals. Everyone can't wait to see him on the park."

"I just want to thank all the people who stood by me, and kept me from giving up," said Nwaogazi. "The time has come to repay your faith and show you how I play."

Kingz may don Wellington boots

Former All Whites soccer manager Dave Wilson is behind an ambitious bid to relocate NSL club the Football Kingz to Wellington.

The millionaire Kapiti Coast businessman insists he has no intention of buying the franchise himself but admits he heads a consortium keen to give New Zealand's soccer fraternity "more ownership" of the club by moving out of Auckland.

Dwindling crowd figures and ongoing funding issues have opened the way for a takeover of the Australian national league franchise from current owners Chris Turner and Ted Midlane.

Wilson has strong links with the Kingz through his Porirua-based Ole Academy and close friendship with coach Ken Dugdale.

He brokered the deal to bring Dugdale back from Norway late last year and also purchased a property in Auckland where up to seven members of the club's playing and coaching staff were housed during the NSL season.

"If it's going to be in Wellington then now is probably the best opportunity for it to be here," Wilson said.

"We've got things rolling and I'd like to think it would happen sooner rather than later."

Wellington's Westpac Stadium would become the Kingz' new home, though Wilson has promised to take up to six home games "around the country".

Westpac Stadium has attracted the two highest attendances in the Kingz' chequered four-year history with crowds of 13,111 and 11,622 turning out for matches against Marconi and Sydney United, respectively, in 2001.

As few as 800 people turned up for the Kingz' last match this summer in Auckland as the club tumbled down the table to finish 11th in the 13-team league after back-to-back eighth placings and the wooden spoon in their three previous campaigns.

"There's definitely an opportunity, with crowds not supporting the Kingz as much as the Auckland soccer fraternity would like them too," Wilson said.

"Chris Turner and Ted Midlane have done an absolutely superb job getting the Kingz up and running and I want that stressed."

But I believe a change (of direction) is well overdue and a move would be beneficial for the game in New Zealand."

Wilson said discussions with Westpac Stadium chief executive David Gray had convinced him to play no more than half the Kingz' home games in Wellington.

"I'm not silly enough to think we

could do 12 games in Wellington. I've listened to the advice of those in the industry like David Gray who know what they're talking about."

Turner admitted he was open to offers providing the price and terms were right.

"The answer is we've got an open mind to everything. It's about what is good for the club," he said.

"We're always looking for ways to improve the brand and if someone came along with an offer we'd look at it... if we thought it was right then we'd do it."

The Kingz main sponsor, Vodafone, is off-contract and any renegotiation of that deal is the key to the club's short-term future.

Souths Kisnorbo waiting on next move

South Melbourne defender Patrick Kisnorbo admits he is unsure of what lies ahead of him. The Australia international comes out of contract with South this year and is considering a move to Europe.

"It's a little weird, because I was planning to be playing with South at this time," Kisnorbo told tribalfootball.com. "But with South out of the finals, I'm now having to reassess things a bit."

Kisnorbo is keeping fit with personal training sessions in the likelihood that trials are offered by European clubs at the end of the northern season. "My agent is working on a few things and there's interest from Holland and England," he said.

"I really want to make the big move this year. I feel I'm ready." He continued, "My great ambition is to be a regular with Australia and I know the only genuine way of achieving that is by playing well with a European club."

"I've been a bit disappointed that there hasn't been any Olyroo games. We're only a year away from the Olympics and I really want the chance to establish myself in that squad."

Kisnorbo has had trials with Lorient and Leeds United over the past 12 months and added, "It'll be a wrench to leave South, they've been ever so good for me."

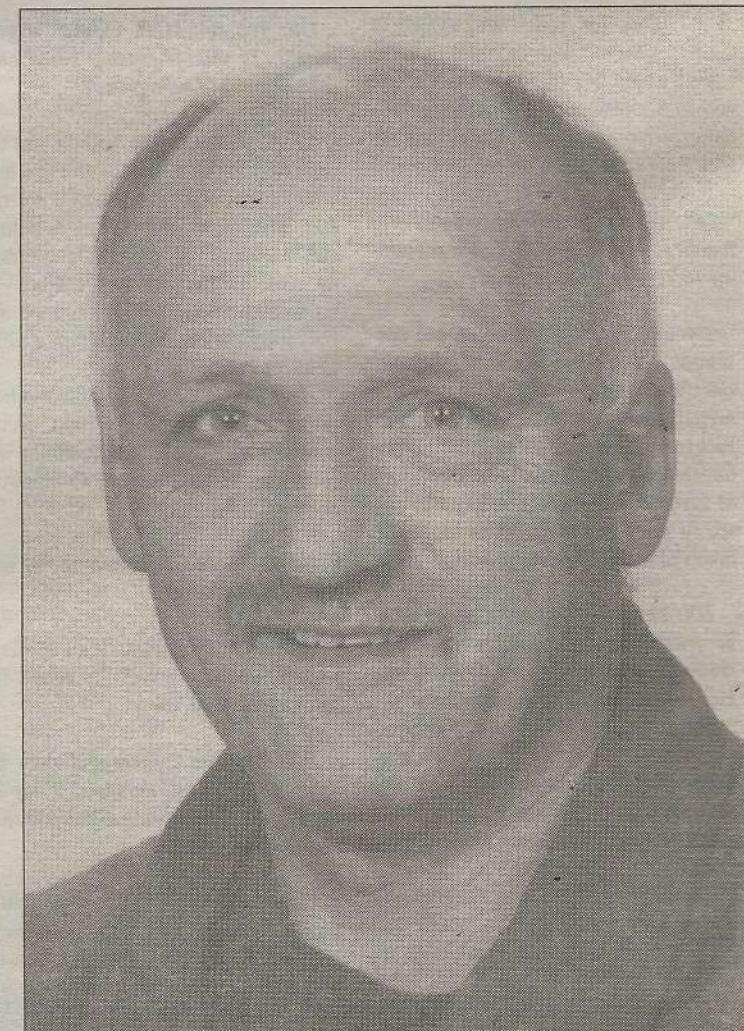
"But I'm determined to win a European



Patrick Kisnorbo: South Melbourne defender wants an overseas move next season.

deal this year. I'm at an age where it's got to happen for me. Really, only circumstances saw my trials at Leeds and Lorient fall through. I did enough to impress both clubs, but things like my contract with South and the position I played worked against me. But now I feel well prepared."

"I'm just waiting for my agent to work something out for me, then I'll give it my very best shot," he said.



Ken Dugdale: Football Kingz coach.



Queensland Lions Soccer Club

Phone: (07) 3271 3636 • Fax: (07) 3271 3804
133 Pine Road, Richlands. QLD.
www.qldlions.com



Premier League Round 4 By Glenn Davis

Wynnum Wolves Remain In Top Spot

Wynnum Wolves dropped their first point but remain at the top of the premier league table just one point clear of Queensland Lions after a 2-all draw with Ipswich Knights at Bundamba on Sunday.

In a thrilling spectacle, Wynnum had to rely on a penalty to share the points with an enthusiastic Knights which looked set for a major upset leading 2-1 lead late in the game.

Wynnum's Chris White gave the visitors a 1-nil lead after 20 minutes before the Wolves went in at the break on level terms after defender Shane Barnes scored an own goal.

Ipswich hit the front 2-1 in the 50th minute after midfielder Peter McKendrick capitalised on a dropped ball from Wynnum keeper Scott Higgins to tap in from close range.

Ipswich, who were playing with greater enthusiasm after a dis-

pointing loss to Brisbane City last week, conceded a controversial penalty in the dying stages after Pedram Salami was fouled in the box.

Corey Haggel made no mistake with his spot kick to enable the visitors to share the points and maintain their unbeaten run after four rounds.

Ipswich coach Andy Ogden thought his side did enough to win and believed the penalty was harsh.

"Their player got a slight touch and made a big belly flop when he knew he couldn't get to the ball," Ogden said.

"Our players know when they give away a penalty and this one was definitely sus."

Although disappointed with the result, Ogden was delighted with a marked improvement from his hard working outfit.

"I thought we did enough to win. The boys are more peeved about drawing this game than losing to Brisbane City last week," Ogden said.

"We played good entertaining football but what concerns me is

we're still missing chances."

Wynnum coach Kevin Meacock believed a draw was a fair indication of the game.

"From what I saw of Ipswich last week against Brisbane City they really stepped up against us," Meacock said.

"It was very hot and the pitch is bumpy so I suppose it's nice to go away with a point."

Queensland Lions put behind their shock loss to Pine Rivers last round with a 6-nil thrashing over relegation favourites North Star while Toowoomba also remain unbeaten after drawing 1-all with the Gold Coast.

Lions led 2-nil at half time after goals from Darren Sime and Andrew Davidson before a four goal haul in the second half.

North Star's Michael McEvoy scored an own goal to give Lions a 3-nil lead early in the second half before a further three goals came from Damian Volker, Greg Di Losa and Stu Drinkeld.

Pine Rivers continued its fine early season form to move into third place with a 2-1 away win against Rochedale.

Pine Rivers got off to a dream start when Japanese striker Koji Kangawa headed home from close range after only five minutes before defender Steve Carter equalised on the half hour from 25 metres.

Unfortunately for Rochedale, it was former teammates Damian Harris and Darren Bender who combined to give Pine Rivers its match winner with only four minutes remaining.

Harris, a former State defender, sent in a perfect cross for Bender who also scored with his head.

Pine Rivers' player coach Clayton Koch was delighted to pick up three points away from home which followed on from an upset 2-1 win over reigning champions Queensland Lions last round.

"The game could have gone either way and was entertaining end to end stuff," Koch said.

"Rochedale hit the post twice in the second half and we had a goal disallowed for offside which was borderline.

"They played some really good stuff and look dangerous on a number of occasions."

Rochedale coach Keiran Cooper agreed with Koch and believed his side deserved a draw but had no time to hit back after the late winner from Bender.

"A draw was probably a fairer

The Gap coach Ashley Hempstead was livid with the refereeing but was reluctant to comment.

"It will only sound like sour grapes," Hempstead said.

"I'm very upset about the official but I won't comment.

"We were down 2-1 at the break and looked like getting back into the game but the second half was a joke.

"We've got some real problems in defence and we haven't got any depth to cover."

Hempstead was equally disgusted with the lack of protection his star striker Kolpak receives from officials.

"Glen might as well not play. He just gets kicked every game," he said.

The Gap started the season with a 3-1 ambush over Brisbane City but have come back to earth with a thud following three successive losses to Ipswich, Taringa and to newly promoted Souths.

Brisbane City caused a minor upset at home downing the youthful Taringa Rovers 1-nil.

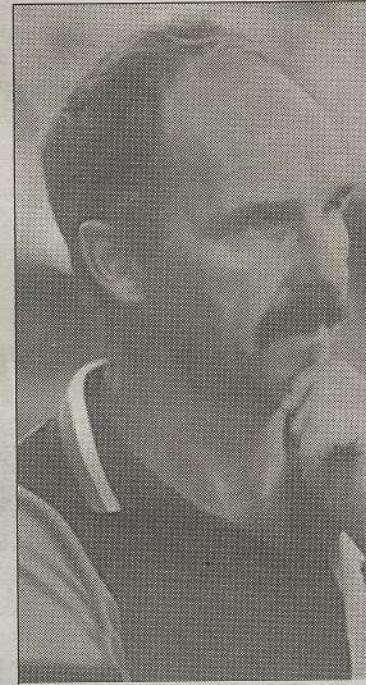
City's Jon San-Martin made it two wins on the trot for Brisbane City scoring from close range after Robbie Kidd drilled a low cross into the box.

City coach Frank Pimblett was delighted with the result after losing several of his players to Taringa in the offseason.

"I was a bit concerned before the game with a few injuries we had and some with the 'flu, but we played well," Pimblett said.

"Taringa are a good side and they had plenty of possession but rarely threatened us."

"They were on top and looked very dangerous for about 15 minutes in the first half but we changed a few things and sorted it out."



Frank Pimblett: Brisbane City coach was delighted with his side's one-nil result over the Taringa Rovers.

result but they wanted to win more," Cooper said.

"It was a game which could have gone either way and their second goal came too late for us to try and hit back."

Souths United picked up its first premier league three pointer with a 5-1 away thrashing over The Gap.

Souths raced to a 2-nil lead before Glen Kolpak pulled one back for the home side to trail 2-1 at the half time break.

However, The Gap were no match for Souths in the second half conceding a further three goals.

Souths coach Peter Bannon was relieved to get his first win of the season.

"It's a bit hard to evaluate against the opposition we played," Bannon said.

"Our attitude was a lot better and we showed good commitment."

"It was somewhere like our performance we put up against Lions when we played well and a lot better than the loss to Rochedale."

ROUND 5 FIXTURES

SATURDAY APRIL 5

NORTH STAR	v	ROCHEDALE ROV	7:00PM	O'Call. Pk
PINE RIVERS UTD	v	THE GAP	7:00PM	W. A. Pk
SOUTHS UTD	v	BRISBANE CITY	7:00PM	W'Ley. Pk
PALM BEACH SHARKS	v	QUEENSLAND LIONS	7:00PM	Palm. Bch
WYNNUM	v	T'WMBA RAIDERS	7:00PM	Carm. Pk

SUNDAY APRIL 6

TARINGA ROVERS	v	IPSW KNIGHTS	4:00PM	Jk. Sp. Pk
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Letters to the Editor

NO MORE FRIENDLIES?



Dear Sir,
I thought that Soccer Australia had learnt their lesson that after that big match which saw our Australian side rip up the English in February, that more high profile matches were needed.

The news of Argentina-Australia going under was somewhat of a shock to many supporters who clearly thought that this was to have come in fruition.

It's sad how a section of the SA committee brought it upon themselves to hype up this game that didn't even eventuate –



Frank Farina's Socceroo side need more friendly matches to improve their chances of making that elusive 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Shawn Wright,
Coogee, NSW.

TV COVERAGE AT LAST!

Dear Sir,
They took their time but alas an NSL match was finally broadcast live on Television last week.

Hailing from Sydney, I had the pleasure of watching Newcastle take on the Power in a top match.

It was as if I was in a dream, could this be true an NSL Match on TV?

I hope that the coverage is extended throughout the series and wish that next season we get a live match or two on the box.

Soccer Australia must do all they can in reaching an agreement with Channel 7 in organizing this.

It's a joke the way Channel 7 has been handling Australian soccer's coverage, its as if they don't give two hoots about the world game played in almost every country across the globe.

NSL Clubs In Crisis?

Dear Sir,
It's been highlighted that throughout this NSL season a number of clubs have faced the daunting prospect of not paying their players for a number of weeks or so due to the lack of funds at the clubs.

What kind of professionalism is that when we have players who are doing their jobs, not being paid what they've asked for in order of

surviving in this day in age.

It's a joke knowing someone personally who plays for a Sydney club that they've failed to pay him on a monthly occurrence, not just him but a number of the players.

This brings out the worst possible media attention for the game, no wonder SA Director Dominic Galati came out and said that soccer is "the laughing game of

Mark Spencer,
Gladesville, NSW.

SOMETHING'S WRONG

Dear Sir,
You know when there is something wrong with the current NSL Finals Series with no clubs from the Victorian section.

Both South Melbourne and the Melbourne Knights failed to make the finals this season earmarking a disastrous year for both Victorian sides.

It started off well with both clubs showing signs of going all the way however the pair made a U-turn during the season when they sacked their coaches.

Internal bickering at both clubs haven't eased anything while missing out on the finals was pretty much the dagger in the heart for all their supporters.

It's been some time since we've not seen a Victorian club in the finals series.

At this point in time a few Victorian clubs have put through their applications to join the NSL next season: Melbourne Dragons and Whittlesea Stallions have expressed their interests.

I say give them a go – look at the amount of Sydney teams that are currently in the NSL, we need more diversity in the game especially in Melbourne.

Here's hoping for both clubs making the finals next year.

Stuart Duggan,
St Kilda, VIC

QUALITY COVERAGE

Dear Sir,
I am pleased to see more coverage of women's soccer in the past few months.

We need tournaments such as the recent Australia Cup to attract more interest to the sport.

The bad press caused by the South Korean team in this mini-tournament lead to more coverage in the media. Pity that it took such controversy to bring in the television crews, and not the improvement that the Matildas displayed in these games.

The number of young women taking up the sport have increased in the past

LAUGHING STOCK OF AUSSIE SPORT

Dear Sir,

With the news that the planned Australia-Argentina fixture will in fact not go ahead, it is no wonder that SA Director, Dominic Galati, has labelled the game as the "laughing stock" of Australian sport.

While I am of the opinion that those in the industry should work towards improving this position instead of simply stating the negative aspects, the comment nevertheless brought about an interesting point.

One of the roles of the governing body of a sport is to ensure that planned matches, especially involving internationals, are dealt with the utmost care and that every factor (eg.

television rights and venue availability) are taken into consideration.

FIFA have introduced a new calendar which allows national federations to plan friendlies in advance, and Australia have had a knack of missing out.

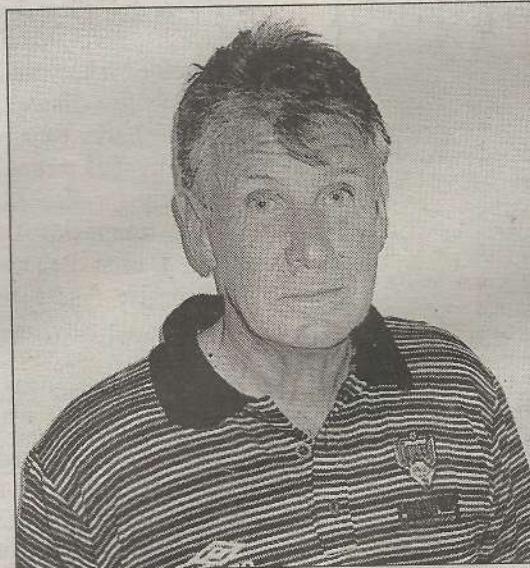
It was foolish to think that Argentina would bring all of their top players across Europe and South America together at such short notice for a friendly match.

Andrew Cameron,
Griffith, NSW.



Adrian Santrac: Matildas coach will be hoping for huge year with his squad.

LOSS OF ROAR FOR WOLVES



Ron Corry has left the Wolves after a three-year coaching stint with the club.

Dear Sir,

The performances of the Wollongong Wolves side in the final month of the regular season were quite disappointing and being a loyal supporter, I was disturbed by the attitudes apparently on display as the team began to slide down the table.

After reading captain Stuart Young's comments in ABSW last week, it did seem that there was a general feeling that those involved with the senior team

were simply waiting for the season to end.

Sadly for supporters in the 'Gong, the difference

between the former NSL superpower of two seasons ago and this season's poor version have been incredibly large.

I just hope that the rebuilding process is settled sooner rather than later. With the departure of Ron Corry, I hope that the board have the sense to bring in someone who can inspire good things out of an average team.

A name that immediately springs to mind is John Kosmina.

Alex Richardson,
Shellharbour, NSW.

CROWDS FIGURES

Dear Sir,

Just wanted to quickly point my attention to the recent crowd figures that were seen in the NSL's first finals round series.

We are obviously in trouble if we can't at least average 5-10 thousand people at these very important matches.

I went to watch the Force play the Sharks in an entertaining game that saw roughly 3000 people at the game?

What a joke! It was as if it was just another NSL match, the atmosphere was

non-existent and it was a shame as the side produced a brilliant result to defeat this year's Premiers.

The Glory on Saturday had around 7000 people, for their standards that was quite poor.

Whether they've been labelled 'chokers' or not, the Glory have always been the leaders in gaining top crowd averages.

Finally in Newcastle around 4000 turned up to watch their side play the Power and after their loss, I don't know

whether anymore will turn up.

This indication of crowd shortages at our most important times is something that has to be looked at carefully.

Think about it – if we can't pull together top crowds at big matches, then imagine how bad our normal NSL matches will be?

Scott Oakes,
Modbury, SA.



OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

SWISS HIT OR MISS?

The new National Soccer League Championship Series, or revamped finals concept is well under way, but the jury is still divided on whether the system is brilliantly innovative or a complete wipeout.

The only constant about the Australian NSL since it began in 1977 under the Philips League banner has been change.

This Swiss formula is the latest diversity to be adopted by Soccer Australia and it brings more complex alterations for the fans to understand.

Our NSL chiefs see merit in adopting the Scandinavian concept with the most significant difference being the retention of the real, fair dinkum Aussie Grand Final to decide the champion.

Will the Australian public embrace the lengthy second phase of the 2003 season? Will it be a hit or a miss?

The issue certainly sparked a lively debate between outspoken "Australian" newspaper soccer writer Ray Gatt and Soccer Australia statistician Andrew Howe.

Ray penned a hard-hitting report in the national broadsheet, provoking a personal response from Andrew.

Ray fired the opening salvo with his article headed "NSL Shoots Itself In Foot".

RG: "The national soccer league has long been a breeding ground for off-field incompetence but the decision to change the format for this season's finals series surely takes the prize for gross stupidity.

"NSL clubs have a lot to answer for after agreeing to scrap the usual end-of-season series in favor of a convoluted system which has left fans, players and media cold."

AH: "Convoluted system? It's easy: top six play each other twice, the top two from this round robin phase meet in the Grand Final. Try explaining the tip six (or McIntrye final five) in a few words."

"And as a fan from a city whose NSL team (Adelaide City Force) has made the championship phase I am not left cold I am looking

forward to watching four more home games compared to a normal season."

Enter NSL chief Stefan Kamasz "The series is a compromise because there were clubs which were arguing for longer and shorter seasons."

"We have tried to bend over backwards to give the clubs what they want. In the end, there was a comfortable majority for the new format. It was what they wanted."

RG: "Fans are being asked to endure a mini-competition over 11 weeks, in which the six finalists play each other twice, home and away. The top two at the end of the league-style competition meet in the Grand Final on June 1.

AH: "As a fan of a finalist (ACF) it is not a case of 'enduring' this meaningful mini-competition."

RG: Of course most of the reasoning behind the change is that it would provide more games and a better revenue stream for clubs.

But those responsible for this hair-brained scheme, which is a carbon copy of the one used in the Swiss league (and subsequently abandoned) should be made to apologise to local fans."

AH: "Are you sure the Swiss have abandoned it? I don't think so. If it was so bad then why have the Swiss persisted with it for 15 consecutive years and why have ten or so other European leagues adopted the system?"

Those responsible don't need to apologise to me as a fan from a city whose team has made the championship phase."

RG: "What were the clubs thinking?"

AH: You answered that yourself two paragraphs ago."

RG: Why play around with a format which has been one of the few positives in the NSL since it was introduced in 1988."

AH: "Every major league seems to play around with its finals format these days."

RG: Did the clubs take into account the possibility that we could end up with a host of dead rubbers towards the end of the finals?"

AH: "I'm sure they did. But I'm sure that the fact that the clubs get 15-20 more 'live' rubbers compared to last season over-rode this."

RG: What possessed them to allow the season to drag on for another 11 weeks when crowd figures are at an all-time low?"

AH: Obviously, the decision was made before the season started and directly after the league had recorded its third highest average crowd for a season.

Crowds at an all-time low? No way. There have been 16 other seasons where the average crowd was lower than this season (3854). See page 139 of the NSL Season Guide."

RG: "How do the clubs expect to generate media coverage and interest when the big three football codes AFL, rugby league and rugby union are in full swing?"

AH: "What's the difference this season? Are you saying should we finish every season by mid-March?"

RG: Did they take into account that three clubs Olympic, Parramatta and Newcastle share their grounds with rugby league teams and have to play second fiddle when it comes to match scheduling?"

AH: "See previous comment. To try to sidestep some clashes with NRL matches, Soccer Australia even changed the finals draw, ostensibly to suit the Sharks, who share a ground with Cronulla and no other team was disadvantaged by this decision, that made sense."

RG: Adelaide City, who would have played a Perth Glory side lacking the suspended Damian Mori first up, instead played against a full strength Sharks."

AH: "Actually, it wasn't a full strength Sharks."

Andrew Howe had the final say with this admission "I wasn't keen on the idea when I first heard it. That was because to me, a finals

series is a series of cut-throat, winner takes all and loser loses all games with second chances for the top teams."

But this IS NOT a finals series, it's a new phase the championship phase of critical matches. That's why SocAus have labelled it as the Championship series, not a finals series.

Once this is accepted I think it's easier to appreciate the new system. Considering the short regular season, it's a reasonable compromise."

Salisbury: Marcucci, Coolen, Davies.

Pirates 8 (C. Alagich 4, Ugloube 2, Mana, Iacopetta) **Port Pirie City** 1 (DeGioia) Best - Pirates: C. Alagich, Iacopetta, Ugloube; Port Pirie: DeCeli, Hume, Crouch.

Seaford Surfers 0 **Cumberland Foxes** 3 (Donk 2, Billingham) Best - Seaford: Jurado, Rooney, Powell; Cumberland: Donk, Billingham, Heathley.

SA PREMIER LEAGUE

RESULTS ROUND 4

Adelaide City 3 (Saric 2, Deegan) **Modbury Jets** 0. Best - Adelaide City: Vujacic, Saric, Cornthwaite.

Galaxy 3 (Carvalho, Kidd, Rodostheos) **Olympic FC** 3 (Hagias 3) Best - Galaxy: McDonald, Bernadino, Kokkinoplis; Olympic: Hagias, Tsonis, Zotti.

Croydon Kings 1 (McGregor) **Playford Patriots** 0. Best - Croydon Kings: Lucchesi, McGregor; Playford: J. Bell, Agars, Thomson.

White City Woodville 1 (S. Stam) **Enfield Falcons** 1 (Mulady). Best - White City: Keens, A. Stam, Mills, Costa, Stanimovic, Thompson.

Para Hills Knights 1 (Francis) **MetroStars** 2 (Artone, Day). Best - Para Hills: Francis, Pearce, Westervelt; MetroStars: Artone, R. Moore, Day; Raiders v Blue Eagles played Sunday.

STATE LEAGUE

ROUND 5

Saturday, April 4

Blue Eagles v **White City** (Marden Sports Complex 7.30pm)

Saturday, April 5

Playford Patriots v **Raiders** (Ramsay Park 2.45pm)

MetroStars v **Modbury Jets** (Shutter Reserve 2.45pm)

Olympic FC v **Adelaide City** (Thebarton Oval 2.45pm)

Para Hills Knights v **Croydon Kings** (The Paddocks 2.45pm)

Enfield Falcons v **Galaxy** (Blair Athol 7.30pm)

STATE LEAGUE

ROUND 5

Saturday, April 5

Cumberland Foxes v **Cobras** (Bailey Reserve 2.45pm)

Salisbury Berries v **Seaford Surfers** (Steve Jarvis Park 2.45pm)

Hills Hawks v **Pirates** (Karinya Reserve 2.45pm)

Noarlunga United 2 (Savage, Still) **Cobras** 2 (L. Skoumbros 2) Best - Noarlunga: Marsh, McLean, Foy; Cobras: L. Skoumbros, Pantelis, H. Skoumbros.

Panthers 5 (Meyer 2, Russell, McNichol, Thompson) **Salisbury United** 1 (Marucci) Best - Panthers: Sobczanski, McNichol, Russell;

perceived contempt for non NSW Clubs needs to be addressed before it seriously damages the NSL.

The treatment of Adelaide may cost that club the Premiership - a poor show indeed.

CIMERA SLAMS FINALS STRUCTURE

The NSL's long-winded finals series is a load of garbage, said Knights chief Ange Cimera.

He called for the scrapping of the series wanting a return to the popular knock out system.

"There was nothing wrong with the knockout format, the change to a league system makes a mockery of a finals system to decide the champion," he said.

After a 26-round home-and-away campaign, the top six are playing each other twice again. After 10 weeks of finals, the teams finishing first and second on points qualify for the grand final. "It's a load of garbage - if they wanted more games, they should've just extended the season," Cimera said.

"If you were good enough to win two or three games, you made it to the grand final," Cimera said. "Now you're going to end up with a lot of dead rubbers within the first three weeks - you'll virtually be able to write off Northern Spirit after two rounds."

Olympic Sharks and Perth Glory, which finished first and second after 26 rounds, started the finals series with a bonus six points and three points respectively.

Cimera is the first to voice disapproval but his sentiments are shared by many. The finals series is attracting almost no mainstream press coverage in Victoria, only the one-sided thumping of Spirit rating any mention in the Monday sports papers.

The series was designed by Graham Arnold and Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto.

VICTORIAN CHRONICLES

By Brendon Davis

SOUTHS YEAR OF MIXED FORTUNE

With South Melbourne's 2002/03 campaign over, the club released an interim report on the season. This is an edited version of that report.

Season 2002/03 will be defined as an important and historic season for the South Melbourne Soccer Club. Despite the obvious disappointment of not qualifying for the finals series, President Peter Mitrakas and his Board have delivered a number of notable achievements.

These achievements are all the more significant given the difficult trading conditions for all soccer clubs in Australia.

This season South Melbourne has embraced greater professionalism and business practices throughout the Club. These practices have already improved day-to-day operations and will continue to bear fruit in the coming years.

2002/03 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

As a result of the combined efforts of the Board, Administration, and our loyal supporters, the Club has achieved the following:

- A reduction in debt levels from \$1.3M in May 2002 to \$670,000 as of March 2003
- A "balanced budget" for this season with the Club on track to post a modern profit
- South Melbourne will be one of the few NSL Clubs to achieve a surplus this season
- Apart from World Club Championship revenues, this will be the first season the Club will post an operating surplus
- An extension of the lease for Bob Jane Stadium for a further 14 years on favourable trading terms
- The introduction of Coterie Groups based on successful AFL models
- Coterie groups have raised over \$280,000 in

2002/03 and have introduced a number of new supporters to the Club

- They have also proved a valuable source of advice and expertise with these groups regularly providing input into the Club's future direction
- A revamped Coterie system will attract additional members and revenues next season
- Ground redevelopments including an expansion of the Corporate area
- Construction of a further 16 corporate boxes which were largely sold
- Construction of dedicated Coterie entertaining areas

ON THE FIELD

On the field, whilst the disappointment of not making the finals cannot be ignored, the Club has established solid platforms for future success.

This is highlighted by the recent signing of promising young goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic. Eugene joins the core group of Vince Lia, Massimo Murdocca, Michael Baird and Vaughn Coveny as contracted players for next season.

The decision to part ways with coach Danny Wright was a difficult one. However the clubs run of results leading up to his parting was not satisfactory, and action was required in an attempt to improve results and qualify for the finals.

Contrary to certain media reports and despite internal process problems, South Melbourne made news of the decision public immediately after informing both Mr Wright and the players (the players were informed at their next training session). The Club owed a courtesy to the departing coach and its players and staff to release the information only after the relevant parties were informed.

THE FUTURE

The South Melbourne Board have commenced implementation on a range of strategic initiatives that will secure the ongoing viability and success of the South Melbourne Soccer Club.

These include:

- Extinguishing all debt within 12 months
- Securing a high-quality senior coach
- Developing a new playing squad and recruiting the best young talent in Australia
- Undertaking further ground developments
- Fans should expect more improvements at Bob Jane Stadium next season
- Continuing to be at the forefront of reform of the National Soccer League
- South Melbourne has played a leading role in the discussions over the structure and composition of a reformed NSL
- Positioning the Club for entry and success in a revamped NSL for season 2004/05

POOR TREATMENT OF ADELAIDE

Victorian soccer officials have expressed sympathy for Adelaide City who were treated "in the shoddiest possible way by the authorities" according to a club official.

Local officials, who have all spoken on the condition of anonymity, collectively believe that once again the Sydneycentric SA administration have crumbled to the demands of a Sydney team which has severely disadvantaged a non-Sydney team, Adelaide, who would have faced Glory with striker Mori suspended.

Victorian clubs frequently express anger over the perceived Sydney bias of the NSL with the frustration growing over the last 12 months.

Even the VSF have joined the chorus. President Many Galanos told Neos Kosmos this week Victoria yields a poor return for its major financial contribution to soccer at a national level.

Another official told ABSW that "neither Knop nor Remo (Nogarotto) have been to a Victorian NSL game. The only time we saw them at a game was when we were at their beloved Perth".

At a time restructuring of the NSL is so important, with the NSL Board finally earning respect in the community, the

Oceania Women's World Cup Qualifiers

By Janene Mar

QANTAS MATILDAS QUALIFIERS TEAM ANNOUNCED

Two players from outside the recent Australia Cup squad have fought their way into the Qantas Matildas team to contest the important OFC World Cup Qualifying tournament commencing 5 April in Canberra. The 20-member team was announced last Tuesday.

Midfielder Taryn Rockall and forward Amy Wilson celebrated their return to the team after an absence. They join sixteen players who finished second behind Australia in the Australia Cup, plus defender Dianne Alagich and goalkeeper Melissa Barbieri who were withdrawals from the January tournament through injury.

Rockall, age 25, makes her comeback after suffering a knee reconstruction which last year setback her international career in its early stages. The 21-year-old last played for the Qantas Matildas in the January 2002 Australia Cup, and, apart from the four overseas-based players, is the only non-Australian graduate of Sport scholarship athlete in the team. Alison, age 22 from Canberra, is recalled into the side after missing out on selection for this year's Australia Cup.

The four players in America's professional league - Australian captain Cheryl Salisbury, co-vice captain Joanne Peters, Dianne Alagich, and Kelly Golebiowski - return for international duty, arriving in

Canberra to join the remainder of the team on 2 April. Salisbury and Peters are the only survivors from the last World Cup Qualifiers held in 1998 in Auckland, whilst Salisbury also competed in the 1994 qualifying tournament in Port Moresby. The rest of the group will be experiencing their first World Cup Qualifiers, although Alagich, Golebiowski, and Wilson went on to play in the 1999 World Cup along with Salisbury and Peters, and Sacha Wainwright plus Salisbury were members of the 1995 World Cup team.

AIS/National Coach Adrian Santrac has been working with the Australian-based players since the AIS Training Camp commenced a fortnight ago.

"We've been preparing for the last fifteen months for this time to come, and we're very excited with the opportunity to achieve our goal of qualifying for the World Cup," said Santrac. "We don't expect it to be easy, however these players selected have the quality to deliver the performances that are expected, to not only qualify but also to leave our mark on the World Cup in September."

The OFC Women's World Cup Qualifying Tournament sees five nations - Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa - vying for Oceania's single berth for the fourth FIFA Women's World Cup in China. Sixteen finalists will compete in the flagship event of women's football this September/October.

AUSTRALIAN TEAM - 2003 OFC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT (20) :

Player	Program	Hometown	Pos	DOB	Caps
Dianne ALAGICH	USA-based	Adelaide	D	12/05/79	32
Melissa BARBIERI	AIS / VIS	Melbourne	GK	20/01/80	4
Hayley CRAWFORD	AIS	Newcastle	F	27/03/84	3
Rhian DAVIES	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	D	05/01/81	13
Bryony DUUS	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	M	07/10/77	34
Gill FOSTER	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	M	28/08/76	11
Heather GARRICK	AIS / QAS	Sydney	M	21/12/82	31
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	USA-based	Sydney	F	26/07/81	50
Pamela GRANT	AIS / QAS	Rockhampton	D	15/11/82	2
Olivia HOHNKE	AIS / QAS	Toowoomba	M	08/08/78	7
Tal KARP	AIS / ACTAS	Perth	M	30/12/81	8
Cassandra KELL	AIS	Central Coast	GK	08/08/80	6
April MANN	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	F	21/04/78	14
Joanne PETERS (VC)	USA-based	Leeton	M	11/03/79	44
Taryn ROCKALL	USA-based	Sydney	M	11/11/77	4
Cheryl SALISBURY (C)	USA-based	Newcastle	D	08/03/74	81
Thea SLATYER	AIS	Sydney	D	02/02/83	8
Danielle SMALL	AIS	Newcastle	F	07/02/79	12
Sacha WAINWRIGHT (VC)	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	M	06/02/72	45
Amy WILSON	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	F	09/06/80	34

SHOWDOWN IN CANBERRA

The stakes are high. There are no second chances. Can our Qantas Matildas go forth and qualify for their third consecutive women's World Cup? Make sure you see for yourself. Head to Canberra and cheer them towards the prize. Here's a brief rundown of the teams they'll be up against -

THE KIWIS

Old foes New Zealand may have only had a total of five internationals since the 1998 World Cup Qualifiers (all at the 2000 Pacific Cup). They may also have lost the eight matches against Australia (since 1994). But certainly don't write them off in a World Cup campaign.

For starters, we know the Kiwis would do nothing better than to knock off the Aussies, and will play out of their skin, with the fire, the passion, the guts, and the spirit when the two meet in what will be that crucial last battle of the tournament.

They have a point to prove. Whilst Australia has moved onwards and upwards since qualifying for the 1995 World Cup, New Zealand has suffered the indignity of fewer and fewer matches, resources and finances. What makes their demise hurt even more is that New Zealand qualified for the very first World Cup of 1991, and in the decade before that, twice finished in the top four of the World Women's Invitational Tournament, which in that era, was the premier competition.

The Kiwis have prepared for this winner-take-all Qualifiers with a tour to Texas, playing five matches against good American college teams, enroute to Canberra, and racked up a tally of 3 wins, 1 draw, and a loss.

After such a lengthy period not having played any games together as a team, this tour will have got them in the best spirits possible under the circumstances, lifting their confidence, their team spirit, whilst providing them with matchplay, and the regime of being on tour as one solid unit.

COOK ISLANDS

This is their first time participating in the World Cup Qualifiers. Playing in one tournament in Tahiti three years ago is their sole experience in international football.

But it's great to see them taking the bold step, as indeed it would be great to see a lot more of the island nations competing in the World Cup (as this is, albeit the qualifying stages). Women's soccer has boomed since club soccer started just three years ago, and they now have 350 girls in clubs plus many more playing schools soccer.

For the country which is made up of 15 tiny islands spread over 2 million square kilometres of ocean, and a population of just 19,000, participating here in Canberra will be an achievement in itself.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The only one of the 'smaller' football nations to have competed in every senior World Cup Qualifiers to date. Papua New Guinea braved the big guns Australia and NZ on their own in the 1991 and 1994 qualifiers, losing to some heavy scorelines. But their improvement showed in 1994 when they lost by just two goals to the Kiwis.

When six nations lined up for the 1998 qualifiers, PNG underlined their status by defeating Fiji 7-1 in the third place playoff. Unfortunately PNG have not played any internationals since that time, but are still expected to at least retain that placing of third.

SAMOA

Competed in the World Cup Qualifiers for the first time in 1998, and sadly are the only one of the three first-timers from that event to return once again. Unfortunately haven't played any internationals since 1998, but in November appointed a new Coach in David Brand, who has coached here in Australia for twenty years.

Over half of their 20-strong team competed in last year's Oceania U19 Qualifiers, plus there are a handful of older players who competed in 1998. Enroute to Canberra, will be together in a week-long training camp on the Gold Coast.

FOR THE RECORD

OFC WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

May 1991 - Sydney, Australia

19/05/91	Papua New Guinea v New Zealand	0-16
20/05/91	New Zealand v Australia	1-0
21/05/91	Australia v Papua New Guinea	12-0
23/05/91	New Zealand v Papua New Guinea	11-0
24/05/91	Australia v New Zealand	1-0
25/05/91	Papua New Guinea v Australia	0-8

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
New Zealand	4	3	0	1	28	1	27
Australia	4	3	0	1	21	1	20
Papua New Guinea	4	0	0	4	0	47	47

New Zealand qualified on goal difference ahead of Australia.

New Zealand placed 11th at the 1st FIFA Women's World Championship in China, 1991.

OFC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

October 1994 - Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

14/10/94	New Zealand v Australia	2-1
15/10/94	Papua New Guinea v New Zealand	0-2
16/10/94	Papua New Guinea v Australia	0-7
18/10/94	Australia v New Zealand	1-0
19/10/94	Australia v Papua New Guinea	4-0
20/10/94	New Zealand v Papua New Guinea	6-0

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Australia	4	3	0	1	13	2	11
New Zealand	4	3	0	1	10	2	8
Papua New Guinea	4	0	0	4	0	19	-19

Australia qualified on goal difference ahead of New Zealand.

Australia placed 12th at the 2nd FIFA Women's World Cup in Sweden, 1995.

OFC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

October 1998 - Auckland, New Zealand

Group A

09/10/98	NZ v Samoa	21-0
11/10/98	Fiji v NZ	0-14
13/10/98	Samoa v Fiji	0-5



Adrian Santrac: Matildas coach will be pushing for a World Cup spot.

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
New Zealand	2	2	0	0	35	0	35
Fiji	2	1	0	1	5	14	-9
Samoa	2	0	0	2	0	0	0



Cheryl Salisbury will skipper the squad in

American Samoa v PNG

0-9

P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Australia	2	2	0	0	29	0	29
Papua New Guinea	2	1	0	1	9	8	1
American Samoa	2	0	0	2	0	30	-30

VPL Match Of The Round

Preston Lions 1 Green Gully Cavaliers 1

By Nick Dennis

In a much-anticipated clash, defending champions Preston Lions took on the team that most judge to be their main contenders for the crown, Green Gully Cavaliers.

But as is often the case with big matches, the game didn't quite live up to expectations as the two teams played out a dour, tightly fought 1-1 draw.

The opening passage of play was something of an arm-wrestle and the game was crying out for an early goal.

Green Gully obliged after a terrible defensive mix-up in the 15th minute between Preston keeper Pasi Schwalger and his defence that allowed Green Gully's Henry Velkovski to sneak in, steal the ball away and score an opportunistic goal.

Green Gully almost had a second

a few minutes later when Nick Tsaltas' cross found Andy Vargas at the far post but his effort was disallowed for offside.

However Preston were soon back on level terms. It began with a Chris Emsovski free-kick from 25 metres that Green Gully keeper Darren McGrath could only punch away. From the resulting corner, Vasko Trpevski delivered the ball to the near post and Steven Manceski – who had come on as a substitute in the first minute – was able to edge the ball in for Preston's equaliser in the 30th minute.

Shots on target were few and far between as both sides struggled to find fluency in a game in which the defenders had the edge over their more illustrious attacking opponents. Emsovski had another 25 metre effort, this time from open play, that forced McGrath to dive full-length to save.

Then just after half-time, Tony Neceski had a golden opportunity to put Preston in front against his former club; after good lead-up work from Manceski and John Sapazovski, Neceski was put through but missed the target from a few metres out.

There was a final flurry of chances in the closing minutes. Preston substitute striker Robert Dolevski broke clear and into the penalty area, only to be denied by a desperate tackle from Green Gully defender Dean Fak.

Green Gully striker Nick Lazarevski on the break tumbled in the box at the other end but his claims for a penalty were waved away.

Then deep in injury time, Preston had one last chance to snatch a win, when they were presented with a free-kick just outside the box in a position where Emsovski has scored many goals before.

He struck his shot well but McGrath was able to gather the dipping ball cleanly, the full-time whistle blowing soon after.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	7	5	2	0	17	4	17
Bentleigh Greens	7	3	4	0	17	9	13
Whittlesea Stallions	7	4	1	2	14	12	13
Preston Lions	7	4	1	2	12	11	13
Altona Magic	7	3	2	2	16	11	11
Frankston Pines	7	3	1	3	14	13	10
St Albans Saints	7	3	1	3	9	11	10
Fawkner Blues	7	2	3	2	6	10	9
Bulleen Zebras	6	1	3	2	12	15	6
Essendon Royals	6	1	2	3	4	7	5
Altona East Phoenix	7	1	2	4	7	11	5
Port Melbourne Sharks	7	0	0	7	7	21	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS

NAME	TEAM	GOALS
Peter Kakos	Bentleigh Greens	7
Andy Vargas	Green Gully Cavaliers	7
Peter Hader	Frankston Pines	6
Joe Tricarico	Whittlesea Stallions	6
Alfonso Opazo	Altona Magic	4
Zoran Petrevski	Altona Magic	4
Nick Tsaltas	Green Gully Cavaliers	4

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002/03

FINALS SERIES RESULTS MAJOR SEMI FINAL

SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2003

AIS	4	Power Youth	2
(Anstey 23', Casey 50', Nedeljkovic 70', Giraldi 85' pen)		(Bridge 40', Cardozo)	

PRELIMINARY FINAL

DATE – SUNDAY, 6 APRIL 2003

Parramatta Power v Newcastle United

Kick-off – 4.00pm

Venue: Melita Stadium.

DIVISIONAL GRAND FINAL

WEEKENDING 13 APRIL 2003

AIS v Parramatta Power/Newcastle

United

WOLLONGONG NEWS

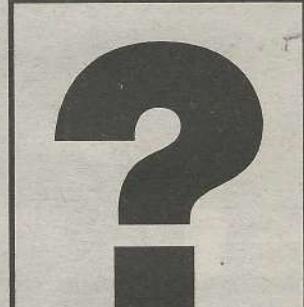
By Otto Bader

Interest In Coach Position – The Wollongong Wolves have received over 20 applications for the Club's Head Coach job. Among them are some known soccer personalities according to General Manager of the Wolves Robert Rossi.

This is rather surprising, considering the "wooden-spoon" position this year, needing a complete rebuild. One advantage the incoming man will have is no baggage as it can't get any worse. Requirements to look for are a coach with knowledge of the players market, recruiting personnel

suitable to lift the Wolves out of the doldrums, ambitious and passionate for achievements as well as a smooth communicator with local soccer fraternity to win them over. That last factor was never ever cultivated by the Wolves in years gone by. Local knowledge is vital to win over public support.

The Board of the club will consider all applicants carefully coming within the financial structure available at present which is not the best due to a very poor season and lack of big money sponsors. It is a real challenge for all involved to select the right coach, capable of resurrecting a "sinking-ship". A decision is due within the middle of April. The club is also waiting



Who will be the new coach for the Wolves next season?
Mid-April has been pencilled in as a possible time for the induction of a new man in charge.

NEWS FROM THE NATIONS'S CAPITAL

By Graham Cooke

Gungahlin Juventus have landed a major coup with the signing of Marcial Munoz from ACT Premiership rivals Canberra Deakin.

Munoz agreed to switch clubs after a lunch with Juventus coach Ian Heywood last week, and was scheduled to make his debut in the Federation Cup quarterfinal match with Tuggeranong United, at Deakin Oval last Sunday.

Heywood is not a prolific hunter of players. "This is my fourth season with Juventus and Marcial is my first major signing since Steve and Martin Lazzari in 1999," he said.

A coach who has the ability to wring the best out of players over a long period, Heywood has allowed the current Juventus squad to mature. However retirements, such as that of Martin Lazzari at the end of last season, are sending warning signals that the club will have to undergo a rebuilding process.

Considered to be one of the best midfielders in the ACT, Munoz appeared as an over-age player in Deakin's National Youth League squad during the summer, and his departure from the club is something of a surprise.

However, Deakin's elimination from the Federation Cup at the group stage following a shock loss to newcomers Cooma, may have convinced him the tide is beginning to turn in local soccer.

Juventus have not been out of the league's top two in the past three years and Munoz joins a squad that is clearly championship material. With players of the calibre of Steve Lazzari, George Cattanach and now Munoz, and Oscar Zamora due to return after the Belconnen Blue Devils' summer season is over, the squad is beginning to look formidable.

* The ACT seems certain to pass a milestone in a few weeks, with more than 10,000 registered junior players.

Soccer Canberra chief executive officer Alan Lee said the number of registered junior teams had increased from 386 to 436 this season. "Last year we had 9600 registered players so it's pretty obvious we will pass the 10,000 mark," he said.

"This is not a bad effort seeing we do not have the focus of a National Soccer League side here any more."

However, the efforts of the Belconnen Blue Devils in the NSW Premier League and Canberra Deakin, the ACT

on some indication from Soccer Australia announcing the format for 2003/2004 NSL soccer competition. In addition soccer in general is waiting on the Federal Government Report due to come out this month with recommendations to better administration of the sport.

Bert Bampton Cup To kick off Sunday April 6th – the Bampton Cup was introduced in 1973 in honour of the late long serving soccer administrator Bert Bampton, who passed away in September 2002. The First Cup winner was Berkeley Soccer Club in 1973, last year's winner was Kembla.

This year's draw combined

Academy of Sport and the Australian Institute of Sport in the National Youth League, had gone some way to plugging that gap.

"A youngster playing the game at, say under 11 level, does see a career path to a reasonable standard of football," he said.

The Hawker Oval headquarters ground has been rested since the first round of the Federation Cup, a fortnight ago, but will stage the Federation Cup final on April 13. Lee also announced there would be three ACT Junior League matches played there every Saturday during the winter.

"This is really to demonstrate that Hawker is for everyone in our soccer community, not just the elite senior or youth players," he said.

The junior competitions kick off on May 3 and, apart from a mid-winter school holiday break for the Kanga Cup international tournament, continue through to late September.

* The Oceania qualifying tournament for the Women's World Cup begins on Saturday, with most of the teams already in place in Canberra. Countries taking part are Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Cook Islands.

Matches will be played at Belconnen's McKellar Sports Centre that gained high marks as a women's soccer venue after staging the Australia Cup in January. Gungahlin Juventus edged closer to their fourth consecutive Federation Cup final appearance with a 4-2 quarter-final win over a disappointing Tuggeranong United on Sunday.

They will play Canberra City, 7-0 winners over Belconnen United's State League second division side. In other games, Cooma's giant-killing run came to an end as Belconnen United's Premiership team beat them 8-2 and Canberra Olympic eased past Burns Club 2-0.

Juventus hit the youthful Tuggeranong with two goals in the first 15 minutes, but then tailed off badly and it was not until the closing stages that the game was made completely safe.

Once again, Steve Lazzari was the driving force, a hat trick bringing his tally of cup goals to 11 in four games. New signing Marcial Munoz was busy, perhaps too busy, in the first half as he faded in the second, but did enough to show he will be a guiding light in the Juventus midfield during the season.

Jimmy Bland's Tuggeranong relied heavily on their work rate,

and that might have been sufficient against a lesser side. Even so, they were still probing and prodding the Juventus defence at the final whistle, and had Loric David produced the goal he should have with an unopposed header off a cross from Tim Webb shortly before half time, the course of the game might have changed.

Intense Juventus pressure from the first whistle produced the opening goal to Lazzari in the fourth minute, after the United defence failed to clear properly; nine minutes later George Cattanach stranded goalkeeper Brett Dickens with a chip over his head into the net.

Tuggeranong battled their way back into the game in the second half, Webb scoring off a cross from Mark Collett. Lazzari restored the two-goal lead when he ran through unopposed to score with the United defence appealing for off-side and completed his hat-trick nine minutes from the end when a well-struck ball from the deep by Yusef Zamora found him in a scoring position.

Even after Adrian Anderson was sent off for a bad tackle on Luke Morgan, United weren't finished and David engineered their second, a clever little flick on to Ben Doyle, which a tiring defence did not pick up until it was too late.

Juventus coach Ian Heywood praised the performance of Cattanach, Lazzari's striking partner. "He's terribly underrated," he said. "He has one of the best tactical brains in the league, knowing just when to feed players through from midfield – and he can score goals."

Bland said United had been their own worst enemies. "The defence in the first 15 minutes was junior standard and that is just not acceptable," he said. "If there is not an improvement, then I will be changing the whole defensive structure."

"Losing those early goals left us too much to do to get back into the game. You simply can't do that against a team of Juventus' quality."

Other results: Canberra Olympic 2 (Tzakis, Clark) Burns Club 0. Belconnen United 8 (Fuller 2, Brancawitz 2, Raad, Galliozzi, De Jesus, Pietrukowski) Cooma 2 (Caldwell 2). Canberra City 7 (Donaldson 5, Prenzski, Lumb) Belconnen United (Division 2) 0.

Semi-finals: Kaleen Oval, Sunday: Belconnen United v Canberra Olympic (noón); Gungahlin Juventus v Canberra City (2pm).

City Coach Barney King's View — While a neighbour club sacked the coach and assistant after a first round setback, Coach King takes his opening loss on the "chin". Whilst disappointed with the outcome he said to be encouraged by some individual performances and hopes with more matches played looking at his newly assembled squad to "gel" with players to focus on the task at hand.

Best for City were according to the coach striker Luke Bedford and midfield player Craig Mason. Striker David Buchanan will return from injury for the coming encounters.

'Fergie' is getting his bounce back Down Under



Northern Spirit's Scottish star Ian Ferguson has settled in nicely under his new surroundings in Sydney.

It is said that news travels fast. Not always, at least not when you are on the other side of the world.

Ian Ferguson is raving about his new life in Australia with Northern Spirit when conversation turns to football in his homeland. What about that result last Sunday? "What do you mean?" asks Ferguson. Well, Inverness Caley Thistle Scottish Cup quarter-final win over Celtic.

"You're joking." A short pause as the message lands at the Ferguson family home in Sydney. "I didn't know that. That's brilliant. You're just made my day."

It will come as no surprise that Ferguson is sitting on crossed fingers, praying that Celtic won't reach Seville and

win the UEFA Cup final. "It's a hard one. It's just well, people would say I'm parochial but I'm not sure I'll want that to happen. We're still getting the Lisbon Lions 30 years later. That's just me. I'd rather see Rangers do well in Europe."

You can extract the boy from Glasgow but you can't remove Old Firm intricacies from Ian Ferguson, winner of ten Scottish Cup league titles, four Scottish Cups and five League Cups with Rangers. He might be in the process of making a new life for himself in Australia but those old habits die hard for this Rangers die-hard.

Ferguson keeps a brief on Scottish football matters as often as he can though he

obviously took his eye off the ball last Sunday. His Sydney connection with his former footballing life is the city - Darling Harbour. Ferguson gets regular invitations to hook up with fellow ex-pat bluenoses and take in TV games, invitations he is happy to accept. "The fans here are all right," says Ferguson. "They come and ask me for photos - and when Rangers win we celebrate."

I mention to Ferguson the upcoming Scottish Cup quarter-final replay at Ibrox between his former clubs. "I'm pleased for Jimmy Calderwood, he and Jimmy Nicholl work hard," he says. "I'm not saying I hope they beat Rangers, I couldn't do that. But if it did happen I'd obviously want Dunfermline to go on and win the Scottish Cup."

Ferguson's fresh start came when he informed Calderwood it was time for him to leave the Pars and Scotland behind. After 16 years in the Scottish game he required a change. In many ways it has been a change for the better.

A new life, no regrets? "It's beautiful here," Ferguson gushes about Northern Spirit. "It's so laid back," says the 36-year old. "You go at your own pace. It's a quieter way of life with not as much hassle. And I get to spend more time with my kids. We do more as a family than we ever did before." Wife Suzanne and daughters Stephanie, 12 (the cheeky one), Jordan, nine, and Chloe, three, see far more of dad — and this dad celebrates the new arrangement.

Football is a less consuming profession for Ferguson now

but still an active one at that. Signed to Northern Spirit on a two-year deal by Scots coach Lawrie McKinna, Ferguson reveals he has just accepted the offer to be McKinna's assistant, even if the midfielder had previously not given two hoots about coaching. But a new start brings a fresh perspective.

"At the age I am and with the experience I have, I can bring things to this team. I'm delighted the manager has made me his No 2. It wasn't something back home I really had a desire for. It has opened my eyes a wee bit. I'm trying to help all the youngsters. There's a lot of good talent here. You can see they have something."

Ferguson still leads on the field too. It was he who shot Northern Spirit into the play-offs with a home win at North Sydney Oval over Marconi Stallions. Spirit, tipped for relegation at the start of the league season, had not made the play-offs in four years. Now their season will run until the end of May. They may not make the Grand Final on 1 June but the season has had its successes.

Northern Spirit's first play-off encounter last weekend was not a success, a 5-0 away beating on the far side of Australia to Perth Glory. "It sounds silly when it's five goals but the scoreline flattened Perth," insists Ferguson. "I think Perth will win the competition. They and Olympic Sharks are the big two, they're like Rangers and Celtic, if you like."

There is a rigid fine system at Spirit, providing funds for an end-of-season trip. Mobiles ringing in the dressing room,

lateness and the wrong kit are all transgressions that can lead to coughing up dollars. Rarely is a conviction overturned.

Last weekend coach McKinna had arranged a new boot deal for Ferguson. They went to an Asics factory in Sydney ahead of the team's departure for Perth. Both were late at the airport. As Northern Spirit policy dictates, any player showing tardiness pays a hefty fine, that fine being doubled if the offence takes place on a day of travel.

Ferguson was double-fined.

Then when his unforgiving colleagues clocked his new gold boots they decided said boots were too close a match to the bleached hair Ferguson is sporting in Australia these days.

So they threw him a fine for that too. Rumours that an injustice-fuelled Fergie responded by throwing his gold boots at the assembled kangaroo court cannot be confirmed.

*Source
www.scotsman.com

KNIGHTS TO SETTLE FOR LOCAL COACH?

Tribal Football reports that Melbourne Knights could settle for a local coach, says president Ang Cimera.

The Knights were set to sign a Croatian head coach on recommendation from football chief Mirko Bazic. But Bazic has taken ill and is no certainty to return to Australia next season.

Cimera explained to the Herald-Sun that the appointment of Canadian-based Franjo Domic could depend on Bazic's return.

"There are no guarantees that Mirko will come back, that will be decided purely on his health," Cimera said. "If Mirko comes back, Domic will come with him."

It's as simple as that. "Bazic can't take the workload he took on in his six weeks here. He needs to be the one overseeing everything and making

decisions and having someone to be his legs out on the training park.

We would want someone willing to accept that pecking order and Domic would fit the mould.

"Domic has worked in the second and third division and is good with young players," Cimera added. "I am still 90 per cent sure that Bazic will come back. The bottom line is he wants to."

He believes we have great talent in our squad and in our youth team and wants to rebuild." However, the Knights board are likely to overrule Bazic on one decision even if he does return.

There is a section of the board that wants popular duo Lubo Lapsansky and Andrew Marth to do preseason with the club in a bid to earn new contracts. Bazic doesn't want either player on his playing list.

VIDUKA'S PLEA FOR GAMES

Socceroos striker Mark Viduka has joined the chorus of frustrated Australian-soccer fans as he pleaded with the game's governing body to secure some much-needed international friendlies.

"We are desperate to play because more than anything, we need game time together to gel as a team," Viduka told The Daily Telegraph.

Once again, Soccer Australia has failed to capitalise on a rare opportunity following the historic first ever win against England in February.

"The victory over England showed we mean business and

are a side to be taken seriously but we can't do anything unless they give us more matches," Viduka continued.

With a proposed April 1 clash against Argentina already abandoned, a two-match series in Australia against Uruguay is planned.

However, with no guarantees at present, soccer fans around the country will be waiting with bated breath.

Socceroos coach Frank Farina has long talked about a long-term plan for the national team but as yet nothing has been forthcoming.

"Other countries, the European nations for instance, have a set program which

stretches over four years from World Cups to European Championships," Viduka said.

"We need something similar, even if it's only friendlies, to build on what we have achieved."

"Otherwise we make it very difficult for ourselves (as we try to qualify for Germany 2006)."

On a club level, Viduka declared that he is happy to stay at embattled Leeds although reports suggest that his Aussie counterpart Harry Kewell's contract talks have stalled.

Kewell is unwilling to commit until the Yorkshire side are assured of Premier League sur-



Socceroo striker Mark Viduka.

vival.

Viduka, who still has three years left on his current deal, is not yet prepared to join the Elland Road exodus.

"I badly want to stay because, despite all the problems we've faced this season, I'm happy at the club and feel we can turn the corner and get some success again," he said.

"I love the area, have a good relationship with the fans and I definitely want to stick around for the future. Whatever that may be."

"I don't share all the gloom and doom about the club. You can choose to be pessimistic or optimistic. I choose optimism."



NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Final Series Rd 2

	TOTAL						PTS	HOME					AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	F	A		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
PERTH GLORY	2	1	0	1	6	3	6	1	1	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
PARRAMATTA POWER	2	2	0	0	4	2	6	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	1
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	2	2	0	0	4	2	6	2	2	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLYMPIC SHARKS	2	0	0	2	1	4	6	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	1
NORTHERN SPIRIT	2	1	0	1	3	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	3	6
NEWCASTLE UNITED	2	0	0	0	3	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	3

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 3

(S Smeltz 47', 90', S Thomas og 18')

NEWCASTLE UNITED 2

(T Dodd 7', E Masi 82')

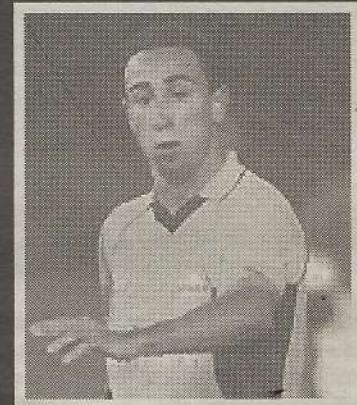
Referee: Simon Micallef. **Crowd:** 2,766. **Venue:** Hindmarsh Stadium.
Teams: ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Acevski, Fyfe, Kovacevic, Valkanis, Pellegrini, Pantelis, Veart, Smeltz, Vidmar, Lozanovski (Kemp 82'), Pelosi (Tunbridge 69').
Subs Not Used: Lagati, Terminello, Scarsella (gk).

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Willis, Thomas, Bingley, Dodd, Wilson, Blagojevic, R Griffiths, Masi, A Griffiths, Middleby, Wheelhouse.
Subs Not Used: Roberts, Schirripa, Johnson, Perosh (gk).
Cautions: M Valkanis (ACF) 22', J Wheelhouse (NU) 40', M Wilson (NU) 72'.



Travis Dodd (left) challenges with Aurelio Vidmar (right) for the ball during Adelaide Force's three-two victory over Newcastle United.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



AHMAD ELRICH
(PARRAMATTA POWER)

After Parramatta Power's amazing two-one win over the Perth Glory, many pundits wondered who would claim this week's ABSW Player of the Week.

Alas, it was wing-back come striker Ahmad Elrich who claimed his second Player of the Week win with a brilliant performance up front. Elrich got himself on the score sheet with a well-taken goal but it was his sheer pace that certainly unsettled the Perth Glory defence.

The Power have relied heavily on the services of Elrich on the right-flank but will be thanking their lucky stars that he's found a new weapon in his game - scoring goals. The goal scored against the Glory was his ninth for the season - not bad for a wing-back who has now donned the boots of being one of the clubs leading scorers.

PARRAMATTA POWER 2

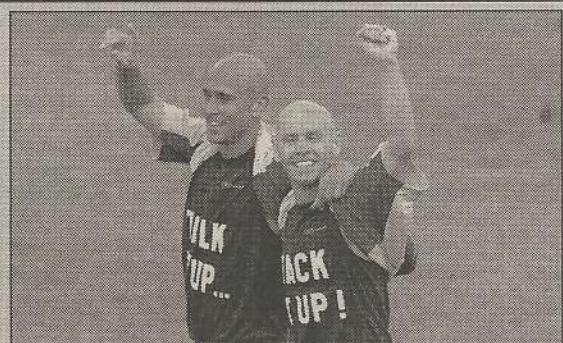
(D Brown 24', A Elrich 33')

PERTH GLORY 1

(J Harnwell 45+')

Referee: Brett Hugo. **Crowd:** 2,214. **Venue:** Parramatta Stadium.
Teams: PARRAMATTA POWER: Liam Reddy, Alvin Ceccoli, Michael Beauchamp, Paul O'Grady, Matt Thompson (Peter Zorbas 71), Brad Maloney, Damien Brown (Brendan Renaud 77), Wayne O'Sullivan, Ahmad Elrich, John Buonavoglia (Royce Brownlie 85), Kosta Salapasis (gk).
Sub not used: Daniel Vukovic and Nick Orlic.

PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Horsley, Harnwell, Hassell (Byrnes 84'), Gumprecht, Miller, Mirdja, Despotovski (Caceras 73'), Pryce (Danze 89'), Colosimo, Tarka.
Subs Not Used: Coyne, Matassa (gk).
Cautions: B Renaud (PP) 77', S Colosimo (PG) 92'.



Kosta Salapasis & Wayne O'Sullivan show that the Power aren't dead and buried yet after their two-one win against the Glory last Sunday afternoon.

OLYMPIC SHARKS 1

(F Parisi 13')

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3

(N Spencer 31', J Hutchinson 36', D Macallister 78')

Referee: Mark Shield. **Crowd:** 3,513. **Venue:** Toyota Park.
Teams: OLYMPIC SHARKS: Bolton, Juric (Owens 68'), Pondeljak, Halpin (Caravela 68'), North, Parisi, Harris, Porter, Packer, Durante, Ishida.
Subs Not Used: Souris, Srhoj, Hughes (gk).

NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Watts, Spencer (Groves 92'), Tobin, McDermott, Ferguson, Macallister (Osman 81'), Hutchinson (Richter 43'), Tomasevic, Petrie, Wilkinson.
Subs Not Used: Hunter, Rex (gk).
Cautions: J Porter (OS) 76', N Spencer (NS) 65', S Petrie (NS) 84'.



Franco Parisi: Olympic Sharks young striker scored his side's only goal in their three-one home loss to the Spirit.

ROUND 3 - FINALS FIXTURES:

Newcastle United - Olympic Sharks
 Northern Spirit - Parramatta Power
 Perth Glory - Adelaide City Force

ROUND 4 - FINALS FIXTURES

Adelaide City Force - Parramatta Power
 Newcastle United - Northern Spirit
 Olympic Sharks - Perth Glory

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Total
Bobby Despotovski	(Perth Glory)	4
Shane Smeltz	(Adelaide City)	2
Adrian Caceras	(Perth Glory)	1
Goran Lozanovski	(Adelaide City)	1
Peter Zorbas	(Parramatta Power)	1
Paul O'Grady	(Parramatta Power)	1
Joel Griffiths	(Newcastle United)	1
Travis Dodd	(Newcastle United)	1
Esala Masi	(Newcastle United)	1
Franco Parisi	(Olympic Sharks)	1
Dylan MacAllister	(Northern Spirit)	1
Noel Spencer	(Northern Spirit)	1
John Hutchinson	(Northern Spirit)	1
Damien Brown	(Parramatta Power)	1
Ahmad Elrich	(Parramatta Power)	1
Jamie Harnwell	(Perth Glory)	1

Adelaide City Force: 3 Newcastle United: 2

Force Triumphs Over Newcastle Jinx



By Allan Crisp

Until this remarkably fiercely fought battle Adelaide City had never beaten Newcastle United at Hindmarsh Stadium but the Force proved that there's a first time for everything.

The first time did not arrive until the final minute of the game, but the wildly excited crowd cared little about that fact, preferring instead to celebrate City's second win of the Homeart NSL \$50,000 Championship Series.

The unplanned timing of the winning goal made the victory the sweeter because it erased the agony of two injury-time clinching goals by Newcastle in recent matches.

When Kiwi international Shane Smeltz fired home the last gasp effort it also broke the jinx held by United when it recovered from two Claudio Pelosi goals scored in the first 13 minutes to win 3-2 back in January.

Smeltz also knocked a personal monkey off his back by netting two goals to bring his season tally to five from limited game time.

The New Zealander took his place in the starting line up for this vital match when young Nick Budin informed City coach Zoran Matic that his injured knee was not yet right despite signs of encouraging progress at training.

Force pre-game hopes rose when star striker Claudio Pelosi was declared fit to play after suffering neck problems.

But Newcastle was badly undermanned with its ace marksman Joel Griffiths ruled out through injury, joining knee injury victims Peter Tsekenis and Steve Eagleton on the sidelines, while number one goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame still is out of action troubled by a shoulder complaint.

Referee Simon Micallef took a mere 28 seconds to issue the first free kick of the contest, awarded to former Socceroo Aurelio Vidmar, victim of a checking foul.

Iain Fyfe was smartly into attack for the

home side floating over a right flank cross which Smeltz narrowly failed to reach.

Sharp passing was the early order but sloppy work eventually took over as finals intensity increased resulting in a mass of fundamental errors from both sides.

Former City defender Travis Dodd lobbed United into an eighth minute lead when he held off Goran Lozanovski to expertly lob Lupe Acevski in the City goal.

Smeltz then threatened an early reply when he charged into the box only to be denied by young United goalkeeper Tom Willis, whose glove work during last season's Festival Cup tournament for the Australs is fondly recalled.

Force drew level in the 18th minute as Lucas Pantelis crossed from the left into the goalmouth where City defender Michael Valkanis challenged for possession, forcing ex-City defender Scott Thomas to turn the ball over the line for an own goal.

Adam Griffiths hotly disputed the decision, claiming offside but referee Micallef acknowledged his assistant's flag but waved play on.

A free kick for a foul on the edge of the City area to Fiji international Esala Masi was powered on target by Ryan Griffiths but Acevski brought off a sensational finger tip save to keep the Force on level terms.

Former Melbourne Knights goalkeeper Acevski, a star for the Victorian club in a

previous finals campaign, rallied to City's rescue again in the 37th minute as he prevented a close range header from Masi from finding its mark.

Willis was again prominent when denying a Pantelis drive before Acevski made another superb save from a snap shot by Dodd.

An unchanged Force team was first to troop back onto the field for the resumption and hit the lead for the first time in the third minute of the second half as Carl Veart picked out Smeltz on the edge of the penalty area.

Smeltz rounded Adam Griffiths before squeezing a drive just inside the far post for the hard won 2-1 advantage.

A cross from Pantelis was nodded over the United crossbar by a high leaping Diego Pellegrini before Masi boomed an attempt over the opposition goal.

Gallant hard working Pelosi, who again was the provider rather than the receiver throughout an industrious 69 minutes, was replaced by Scott Tunbridge as Matic searched for younger, fresher legs.

Mixed fortunes followed for the finalists with Smeltz missing an easy scoring chance from six metres after Pantelis had provided the lay-off and Tunbridge the final pass.

A minute later Masi flew skywards uncontested to head home a Robbie Middleby cross and Newcastle were on the cusp of another away victory over City.



Adelaide Force players celebrate goal-scoring hero Shane Smeltz after his two goals helped his side gain another three points in the finals series competition.

With nine minutes left the urgency of this championship series peaked as both team went gungho for the winner.

The clock ticked over to 87 minutes as Tunbridge ripped into the box only to blaze wide before Smeltz emulated his team-mate moments later.

Force grabbed the points right on 90 minutes as a pass from captain Ante Kovacevic was cleverly left by Vidmar to be received and dispatched into the goal by the heroic Smeltz.

Conviction, resolution and character does not always translate to classic fare, a fact recognised by City coach Matic.

"This game gave me a headache," Matic reported. "We got three points and that's about it. If we play like that next week (against Perth Glory in Perth) we will get destroyed."

Newcastle coach Ian Crook said, "We were a bit unlucky and played well enough to win, but City's first goal was critical."

"We had eight players out and we dominated the second half," was the parting shot from Crook, while Matic mused that his charges entered the match, "With the wrong attitude."

It was experience and youth which combined to clinch the Force win with Veart leading the way with another polished defensive display, intermingled with aggressive attacking.

Valkanis also lent his vast overseas experiences to proceedings with clever distribution, not an easy task when dealing with the speed and guile of Masi and Ryan Griffiths.

Young Fyfe also was in the forefront of the best, encouraged by the promptings of Vidmar and Kovacevic, while Lozanovski had an uncharacteristic rusty night.

A brace stamps Smeltz as the leading scoring light, while Pantelis and Pelosi contributed grandly until Tunbridge added pace as the late replacement.

Masi, Middleby, Matthew Bingley and Ryan Griffiths excelled for United, while Jobe Wheelhouse again showed the promise expected of a future star.



Ante Kovacevic shown challenged by Fijian International Esala Masi for the ball during last week's finals series match.



Despair for Newcastle as Scott Thomas scores an unfortunate own goal much to the delight of the Force players.



NSL Finals Series Round 2



Olympic Sharks



Northern Spirit

MINOR PREMIERS CUT DOWN TO SIZE

By Peter Damalas

Defending champions the Olympic Sharks have wasted the six point advantage awarded to them for finishing the regular season with the minor premiership.

The 3-1 loss at home to the Northern Spirit condemned the club to their second defeat in as many finals outings to start the post-season.

After two rounds, four teams have six points, with both Adelaide City and Parramatta Power undefeated so far. The reward received for the hard work put in during the regular season have largely disappeared for Olympic, and they are now very much in the thick of a battle to qualify for the Grand Final.

The pressure has fallen on coach Lee Sterrey and his players to arrest the sudden form slump and ensure that the Sharks do not suffer the bad luck that seems to affect minor premiers in the finals.

"We need to look at the whole structure of the team, and especially how we work as a unit" was Sterrey's synopsis of Sunday evening's performance.

But the home side began the match brightly, and Spirit keeper Paul Henderson was called into the first of a series of fine saves to halt Olympic's progress.

On two occasions in the first six minutes of play, Henderson had to dive at the feet of Joel Porter to clear the danger, and in the second instance, he was in good position to block the shot from Andrew Packer after the ball found him on the far post.

With the suspension of Adam Kwasnik, Northern Spirit fielded former Olympic striker, Dylan Macallister, alongside Scotsman Stewart Petrie up front. It was clear from the onset that Macallister wanted to make a point to the public after a torrid season of injury and registration problems. With Petrie operating on both flanks, Macallister played the traditional centre forward's role, and fought hard for possession.

In a move identical to Kwasnik's double in the corresponding fixture during the regular season, club captain Andrew McDermott found space on the right flank and sent a cross into the near post towards Macallister as the

Spirit looked to capitalise on their opponents aerial weaknesses and slow marking.

While his header flew wide, this piece of play was evidence of Spirit's craftiness around the park.

Olympic's Tom Podeljak peppered the goal with long range strikes, but it was Franco Parisi who opened the scoring in the 13th minute after a calamitous series of events.

Despite needing the three points to keep in touch with the pacesetters, two errors cost the Spirit dearly. First, Henderson failed to play the percentages and instead of



John Hutchinson scored the Spirit's second goal in their three-one victory over Premiers the Olympic Sharks.

clearing the ball downfield, he threw the ball to Julian Watts outside the penalty area. The English defender could not control the ball and was dispossessed by Packer and Parisi. The latter swept the ball into the penalty area and drilled a low shot to the right of Henderson's outstretched arms.

The lack of decisive action and poor communication disappointed McKinna, who described the events leading up to the opener as "shocking play".

But his team grew more comfortable in this encounter, and Ian Ferguson's vision and drive in mid-field re-invigorated the side after a slow start.

Patience and tactical awareness paid off on the half-hour as McDermott and then Ferguson utilised the space and time given to them by a relaxed Olympic midfield, to set up Noel Spencer for a tremendous strike at goal. McDermott was first to chase down the ball on the right flank, and with little support, held the ball up and played

square to Ferguson.

The former Rangers man laid the ball off to Spencer who picked his spot in the top corner and found it with power and precision.

Sterrey was particularly disappointed with the manner in which Olympic sat back and allowed Spirit into the match. "Our defending on the first goal was disgraceful. We had six men on the edge of the box and no one shut [Spencer] down" he said.

And in almost a repeat performance of Round 22, the away team took the lead just five minutes later.

With crisp passing and the involvement of left full-back Tomasevic, the Sharks defence were caught napping. Ferguson began the move inside the centre circle with a fine ball across to Tomasevic who powered the ball deep into the box. Macallister held off the attentions of his marker to shield the ball, and waited for Petrie to arrive. The striker blasted the ball across goal towards the waiting John Hutchinson who had ghosted into the penalty area unmarked from a withdrawn position, and scored with a simple tap-in.

The quickfire two goals turned the complexion of the game around and highlighted McKinna's tactical nous.

While both teams endured poor passages of play in which passing was inaccurate, the Sydney derby proved to be interesting as Olympic threatened to

score through their speed, while Spirit took the more deliberate approach.

Vuko Tomasevic spurned a perfect opportunity to extend the lead six minutes into the second period. Following another attacking foray, the defender was

foiled in the box by Troy Halpin and referee, Mark Shield awarded a penalty.

Goalkeeper Clint Bolton dived to his left after receiving advice from teammate Parisi, but was not required to make a save as Tomasevic screwed his effort from the spot wide of the upright.

The fickle supporters suddenly found their voice and urged their team towards an equaliser, but the Spirit defence held firm after conceding ten goals in the past two matches.

In the 63rd minute, Parisi was denied his second goal of the game when his left foot shot was tipped over by the diving Henderson. With the goalkeeper in inspired mood, and veteran Alex Tobin chiming in with some perfectly timed challenges, Olympic found the going tough indeed.

The inability to get a roll-on must be causing some concern for the club as the finals format has ensured tough and more disciplined opponents each week.

Despite having ten men behind the ball, the Spirit fashioned another goal in the 77th minute.

Retrieving possession deep in their own territory, Ferguson again played a major hand as his long through ball was chased down by Macallister, who used his frame to shrug off Andrew Durante. The 20 year old slotted home past the advancing 'keeper in a move which was brutally effective.

The minor premiers were punished for committing all but one player forward, and the supporters began to storm out en masse with ten minutes still remaining.

Without last season's key player, Ante Milicic, the Sharks could not find an appropriate avenue to goal, although Jeremy Harris had two late opportunities to reduce the deficit.

McKinna was willing to heap praise on the entire team, while Ferguson and Henderson, who atoned for his earlier blemish with another two saves at the end of second half, were the major players in the 3-1 win.

His counterpart, Lee Sterrey, asked for more of the "passion and pride" that characterised Spirit's performance, from his own squad.

A vital three points gained for Northern Spirit; another three points lost by Olympic Sharks. Despite Sterrey's prediction that four wins and a draw would certify his team of a place in the Grand Final, the lack of confidence displayed at Toyota Park will be a worrying sign heading into the clash at Newcastle United.



Parramatta Power



Perth Glory

POWER STEAL THE GLORY

By Gianluca Buttarello and Joe Russo

Parramatta Power are looming as serious title contenders after they beat Perth Glory 2-1 at Parramatta Stadium in the Championship Series.

It was probably the midweek speculation and the media focus on the fact that Parramatta Power would fold at the end of next year that spurred on the Power.

Perth Glory, who looked to be well and truly out of form, certainly felt the absence of their attacking ace Damian Mori who is currently out suspended.

However, they also suffered from an off day from Bobby Despotovski who was a mere shadow of the player who scored four goals against Northern Spirit in Perth last weekend.

Perth Glory were also often found wanting in defence and not even an excellent game from their German import Andre Gumprecht could save the day.

Parramatta Power trio of Ahmed Elrich, Johnny Buonavoglia and Kosta Salapasis were a constant thorn in Perth's side as Nick Theodorakopoulos, team continues to send out warnings to its opponents. After last weekend's away victory over Newcastle it was now the turn of last year's Grand Finalists to experience their wrath.

After an action packed first half in which all three goals were scored, it was Parramatta Power who played a very intelligent game of containment in the second stanza to keep Perth Glory at bay.

Full credit must go to Theodorakopoulos, the former Wollongong Wolves coach, who certainly knows how to win an NSL Championship especially against Perth Glory.

After only five minutes it was the Power who rattled the crossbar after Elrich found Brad Maloney and the midfielder, against his old club, hit the crossbar.

Elrich was again proving dangerous and two minutes later it was Shane Pryce turned away for a corner his dangerous ball that was about to reach team-mate Buonavoglia.

Little Buonavoglia found himself in a good position shortly afterwards but luckily for Perth Glory it was Scott Miller who managed to smother his shot at the crucial moment.

Perth's best early chance was in the 16th minute from a Brad Hassell corner but David Tarka's header from close range finished just over.

Parramatta Power deservedly took the lead in the 23rd minute thanks to clever chip from Damian Brown from the corner of the penalty box and he gave Glory custodian Jason Petkovic no chance as the ball sailed into the top corner of the net.

Shortly afterwards though Petkovic managed to redeem himself. He turned away for a corner Buonavoglia's shot that would have certainly been a goal after nice lead-up work from the once again ever-dangerous Elrich.

The in-form Elrich didn't have to wait long and he was duly rewarded in the 35th minute as he scored Power's second goal. After some scrappy play it was Petkovic who pushed the ball away but only as far as a diving Elrich who headed in the goal.

Down by two goals Perth Glory were certainly not

demoralised and towards the end of the first half they received a series of corners.

Right on the stroke of halftime they were able to penetrate Liam Reddy's goal from a set corner piece. Hassell's corner was well met by Jamie Harnwell who made no mistake and the Glory went into the break down by only a solitary goal.

It was a non-eventful and perhaps even boring start to the second half. Parramatta Power were obviously following Theodorakopoulos' instructions to be on guard in defence while Perth Glory had the better of the midfield play.

Former Socceroo Simon Colosimo's shot was saved by Reddy in the 57th minute but Power's reply was swift: Elrich's powerful shot just three minutes

later sailed just over Petkovic's goal.

A Gumprecht free kick set the cat amongst the pigeons in the 62nd minute but Hassell's fancy back-heels was somewhat adventurous.

Reddy was called into action in the 73rd minute as he came out of his goal well to make a save at the feet of a charging Despotovski while Brown at the other end could have done much more with his chance in the Glory penalty area.

The last real chance of the game was in the 84th minute but Salapasis, free kick narrowly sailed over the Glory crossbar. In the end Parramatta Power got the result they deserved while for Mich D'Avray's Perth Glory it is back to the drawing board.



Brad Maloney shown marked by Perth Glory defender Simon Colosimo during last week's finals series match.

From the dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis



PATHEMIC CROWDS

Round one of the new final series format saw hardly any spectators turn up to watch any of the three matches that were played in the new finals format series.

The Friday night clash in Adelaide between the Force and Sharks attracted a mere 2,278, in Perth, the match between the Glory and Spirit had 6,437 while finally the Newcastle-Power game had 4,000 people.

It just goes to show that many NSL fans have yet to grasp the idea of the new 10-week finals format – that and the fact that one match will be beamed live on Pay-TV channel 47.

This is yet another strong indication that the new finals format has been hard to digest by NSL fans.

Most spectators around the ground have stated that the normal 'first past the post' scenario should be used in our Australian National League – Maybe this would create more interest in our very own league?

Perth Glory though has expressed their opinion on beaming their matches live in Perth by scrapping the idea all together.

This does not effect the viewers in Sydney-Melbourne etc.

POWER STILL ON THE MARKET

Anyone wishing to buy a National League club can still go ahead with a 'good deal' as Finals 'dark horses' Parramatta Power are still on the market.

After reaching its first ever finals in its four-year history, the club was put under the spotlight mid-season when the Parramatta Leagues club stated that they will not fund the club after the end of next season?

It's been alleged that a number of stern offers have been made to the club however none have been officially made public as yet.

SOCEROOS IN WA?

Western Australia are in the bid for gaining one of the two friendly matches against Uruguay in May at Subiaco Oval as part of the Socceroos lead-up towards them qualifying for the World Cup in 2006.

SA Director and Perth businessman Paul Afkos stated that Western Australia deserves a Socceroo match at Subiaco.

"If we can't have Subiaco, it makes the decision for the underwriter a lot easier, but I still believe we can get it. The days where internationals are automatically assured to Sydney and Melbourne are gone. Apart from us, South Australia and Queensland are hot on their heels bidding for games."

It is believed that WA will push forward a scheduled Union match of the Wallabies v Ireland clash if they get their way in hosting the friendly soccer match against Uruguay.

DESPOTOVSKI 'THE DESTROYER'

Bobby Despotovski started the championship series in stunning fashion with a four-goal haul in the Glory's 5-0 win over the Northern Spirit last weekend. Scoring four goals is a rare feat and had occurred just 29 times in the NSL before Bobby's haul – or about once per season. And it is the first time in a finals or championship series match where four goals were scored by a player.

NEWCASTLE'S WOES CONTINUE

Newcastle United coach Ian Crook has had a rather tough year to date.

The former English international had his work cut out in gaining a top six entry this season when a number of key players were injured during the season.

At one stage, 11 players were out either injured or suspended but alas 'Crookie' has made the final six.

At this present time Newcastle's injury toll stands at:

Daniel Beltrame 3-4 weeks (shoulder) – Michael Prentice Out for the season (ankle) – Scott Baillie 2 weeks (calf) – Alex Moreira 2 weeks (hamstring) –

Chris Zoricich 2 weeks (foot) –

Steve Eagleton Out for the season (knee) and final Peter Tsekenis 2 weeks (knee).

SPIRIT'S FINANCIAL BLUES?

The Northern Spirit club last week faced the daunting task of answering questions from the media about their rumored poor financial positioning at the moment.

Reports leaked to the media that a number of the players were left with unpaid wages.

The PFA has also stepped in to solve the current problem at the club however club captain Andrew McDermott stated that this hype over non-payments was a "load of rubbish" on a radio show last week.

RUGBY PITCHES

It was clearly evident that the round 1 finals clash between Newcastle United and Parramatta Power played at the now bumpy surface of Energy Australia Stadium was not in shape for a football match.

Now with the Rugby League season kicking off, stadiums such as Energy Australia (Newcastle Knights) & Toyota Park (Cronulla Sharks) will be below NSL level in terms of playing a good game of football on an even surface.

The problem is though that a number of players will suffer due to these unfit conditions, take a look at Newcastle player Steve Eagleton.

His awkward fall on the bumpy surface at Energy Australia has sidelined him for the rest of the season – need I say more?

Headlined by VSF Chairman Manny Galanos' stance, he believes that for the good of the game another club from Victoria is needed.

At this point in time it is believed that the Melbourne Dragons and Whittlesea Stallions have applied for a spot in next season's NSL, but nothing has been officially confirmed due to the uncertainty of the league next year.

PLAYERS PELTED WITH EGGS

How's this for team harmony with the fans.

Around 50 irate Bologna fans, unhappy with the team's recent performances, have pelted the players with eggs and smokebombs during the club's training session.

The angry supporters then confronted the players and coach Francesco Guidolin face-to-face, demanding answers for a slump in form which has seen them fall to ninth in Serie A.

In the last nine matches Bologna have collected only eight points and conceded 18 goals.

Thanks to Agence France-Presse for the story, could you imagine fans from say the Wolves or Stallions who finished last and second last pelt eggs at their players for their finishings this season?

MILENKO THE MAGICIAN

It's not often we make mention of the various spectators who too have played a big role in keeping the game alive in this country and this week ABSW took the time out to mention that one young man by the name of Milenko has done just that.

This youngster is certainly one with a number of stats and figures in the game not just at National League level but at Youth league level as well.

He's always seen roaming around either the terraces of WIN Stadium and Parramatta as well, but also takes the time out in watching other National League clubs within the Sydney area.

Hailing from Wollongong, young Milenko has gained a lot friendships with many high profile people of the game and the good thing is he isn't scared to approach these people.

It's not a huge role in progressing the game however it is fans such as this that continue to support the code through thick and thin.

SHOCKS SPARK NSL FINALS

What a weekend it was with the finals series coming to an end for its second week running with some amazing results which have certainly turned the tides in the whole outlook of the competition.

Friday night saw the Adelaide City Force again show that even if they were out-played by Newcastle United, the result swung their favour in a thrilling three-two win thanks to a brace from Force young gun Shane Smeltz.

Sunday night saw double football fever in Sydney with both the Power and Spirit recording huge wins.

First up the Power reinstated to the league that they do mean business with a two-one win over last year's Premiers Perth Glory.

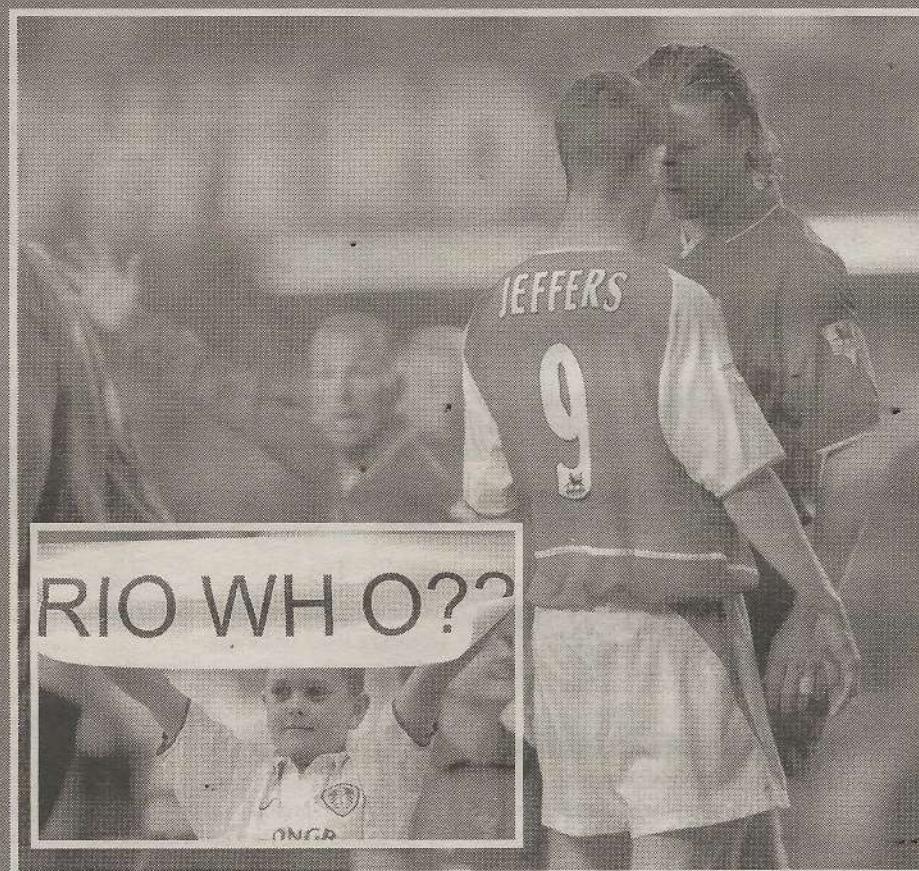
While in the other match, Lawrie McKenna showed yet again that his young side has what it takes to enter the finals as dark-horses with a three-one win over Premiers Olympic Sharks.

It could have been four if it wasn't for a Vuko Tomasevic penalty miss however the result was positive for the Spirit who last weekend got their wish in getting their much needed cheques signed and sealed resolving the payment issue.

At this present moment the Glory-Power-Force and Sharks sit on six points while Spirit have the three.

Unfortunately Ian Crook's men have yet to gain a point however the injuries and suspensions the club has suffered during the year and even now have hampered the side's progression towards a first finals berth.

photo of the week



Up close and very personal – Chelsea's Emmanuel Petit goes head to head with Arsenal striker Francis Jeffers during their FA Cup clash last week.

Things got a little heated during the big clash that saw many rough tackles which did incite many scuffles during the game.

McDermott did say that there was a cash-flow problem at the club however things were on the mend.

Club president Antonio Gelonesi was obviously upset about the media coverage on the issue but said that part of the problem was with former owners of Glasgow Rangers who still owed money to the club.

"I have even had to fund our youth development program because Rangers haven't fulfilled their financial obligations", he stated to the Daily Telegraph last week.

It's been quite a remarkable year for the North Sydney based side who at the start of the season looked like finishing the tail-enders of the competition but shut many peoples mouths after gaining a top six finals spot.

Against this current financial saga and various other happenings at the club, coach Lawrie McKenna has come through leaps and bounds in keeping his side focused on the jobs they have ahead of them.

NSL PLAYERS JOURNEY OVERSEAS

With yet another NSL season set to come to an end soon, a number of NSL players, mostly youngsters will endure weeks or months of trials at European clubs in their off-season.

Unable to print the names due to contractual agreements current players have with their clubs, a number of them will be making the trek to Europe in search of that elusive contract.

Look for one 'big' club to be hit with a number of their players leaving for greener pastures abroad.

VICTORIAN'S BITTER

It's been no secret that a number of high profile officials in Victoria have voiced their opinions on inducting another Victorian club in the National League next season.



SOCER NSW

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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003

MATCH OF THE ROUND

	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	0
	Blacktown City Demons	2

By Stuart Veitch

The Blacktown City Demons have fixed a vice-like grip on the title of Premiers, with a hard-fought 2-0 victory at Lambert Park on Sunday afternoon. In truth, the scoreline belied the closeness of this match between the two league heavyweights, for it was a result that may have gone either way.

While the final minute goal from young substitute Bishara Stephan will be remembered as the match sealer, it was no less a matchwinning contribution than the intervention of Demons keeper John Crawley in the first seconds of the

A.P.I.A.-LEICHARDT TIGERS 0
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 2

(Reid 87, Stephan 94)
at Lambert Park, Leichhardt

A.P.I.A.-LEICHARDT TIGERS: GK Catlin, 3. J Moric, 5. Stergiopoulos, 6. Galluzzo, 7. La Rocca (12. Brown 72'), 8. Stubbs-Mills (16. Tesoro 78'), 9. Arambasic, 13. Tome (10. Karavataki 70'), 15. Langan, 17. Dee, 19. Clark.
Coach: Les De Celis.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: GK Crawley, 3. Foxe, 4. Roodenburg (24. Stephen 82'), 5. Willard, 6. Reid, 7. Catanzaro (13. Riches 75'), 8. Valle, 9. Rastall, 10. Imaya, 11. Nikas, 18. Luff (16. Galayini 76').
Coach: Brian Brown.

Referee: Mark Hester.
Assistant Referees: Jose DaSilva, John Soranidis.
Fourth Official: Jim Nicolau.
Yellow Cards: Catanzaro 30', Langan 43', Clark 75', Galayini 87'.

game. Moments after the kickoff, Leichhardt's Joe Moric whipped in a cross from the left, for Zlatko Arambasic to head down low and hard to Crawley's right.

With Tigers fans all but celebrating a dream start, Crawley brilliantly swatted the bouncing ball out of the goal and away from danger.

In a match that would become an arm-wrestle between these evenly matched sides, the importance of the save was incalculable in the battle of the minds that followed.

Booted by Crawley's inspiration effort, Blacktown put early pressure on the Leichhardt goal. Demons coach Brian Brown later commented on the standout performance of his midfield trio Simon Catanzaro, Naoki Imaya and Kain Rastall, who along with David Reid on the right side, always threatened.

Lucky for Leichhardt, their defence was more than up to the challenge, and Blacktown's lethal duo of Luke Roodenburg and Colin Luff did not have the best of days. Andrew Clark in particular was as solid as ever at the back for the Tigers. Quick in thought and action, tough in a tackle and stronger in the air than his slight frame would suggest, there is little that finds its way past him.

Clark might have made an impact at the other end of the pitch when a Marcus Stergiopoulos free kick just before half time found him alone in the six yard box. However his poorly directed header was aimed straight at John Crawley.

The second half was as tight as the first for the most part, with neither side able to make the vital break. In attack, the Tigers most likely avenue to goal was through the aerial prowess of Zlatko Arambasic at set pieces.

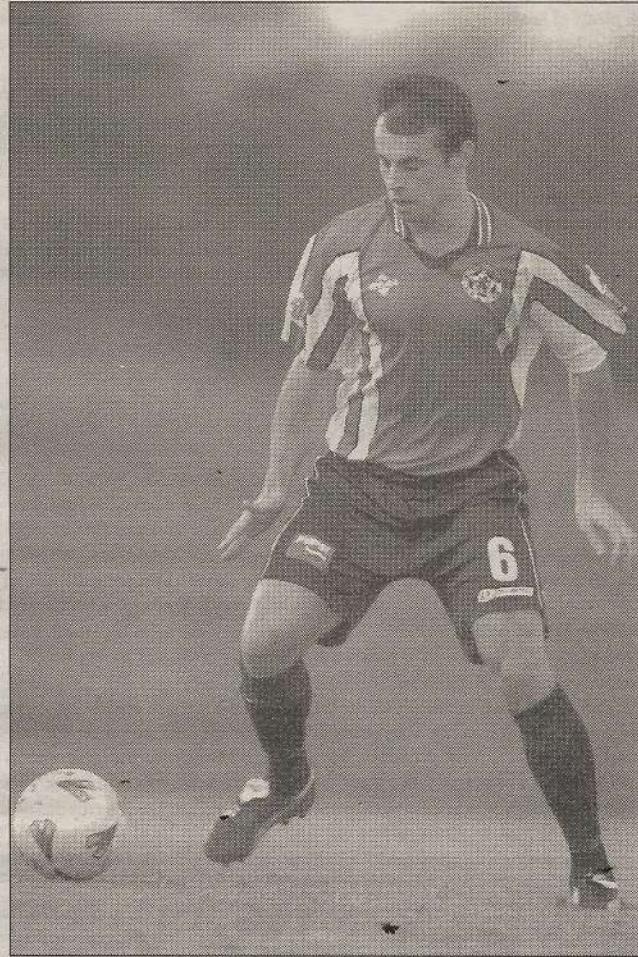
A thundering Arambasic header from a Paul Dee free kick on the hour flew just over the crossbar, while another from a corner was blocked on the line by a surprised Imaya. Otherwise, the Tigers attacking play looked static, with Norm Tome having little influence, and rarely bothering the

Blacktown defenders.

The Demons on the other hand began to look more dangerous with the ball in general play. With Tigers coach Les de Celis dispensing with his usual 4-4-2 formation in favour of a 3-5-2, wide players Joe Moric (on the left) and Paul Dee (on the right) were not afforded with the same level of cover when venturing forward — something David Reid and substitute Steve Riches were able to exploit more and more as the game progressed.

Reid was brought down by Clark on 75 minutes, just as he appeared to be through on goal, while moments later Riches put Roger Galayini behind the Tigers defence. His close range shot was beaten away in a marvellous reflex save from Bob Catlin in the Leichhardt goal, who went close to emulating the earlier heroics of his Blacktown counterpart. Finally, David Reid did punish Leichhardt's lack of defensive width when he ran onto a cross-pitch pass from Riches.

With a moment to pick his spot, Reid carefully placed the ball low into the far corner of the net for an ever so valuable late goal. With the Leichhardt defence in disarray as the Tigers went seeking an equaliser, Stephan scored his first Premier league goal, slotting past Catlin from ten yards to put the result beyond doubt.



Demons midfielder, David Reid, punished the Tigers defence with a well taken goal in the 87th minute.

	Belconnen Blue Devils	5
	Colorbond Coasties	1

By Graham Cooke

During the week Blue Devils coach Lino Fiorese said the winning of the last three home games in the regular season was an absolute requirement if the finals were to be a realistic proposition. On Saturday night the team completed the first leg of that task in style.

From the moment Danny Macor shot them into the lead in the fourth minute, the home side took a grip on the points, and while the Coasties were not out of the game until well into the second half, the Devils ended worth the margin of their win.

Belconnen increased their lead in the 14th minute when Matt Valeri tucked a Nic Purdue cross past goalkeeper Ben Xerri, then lost their way for much of the remainder of the

half, allowing Central Coast some hope when James Monie headed in a cross from Steve Cutler.

But with a minute of the half to go the Devils restored the two-goal margin when Xerri blocked a shot from Valeri only to see it rebound for David Arranz to complete a simple tap-in.

Arranz added to the score when he forced the ball over the line from close range in the 59th minute, and the goalkeeper was unlucky again in stoppage time when he saved from substitute Clinton Larfield with Macor collecting the ball on the edge of penalty area to shoot past the prone goalkeeper and a defender on the line for his 10th strike of the season.

The Coasties created plenty of chances, many of which were spoilt by poor finishing and most of the rest by an excellent goalkeeping display from Anthony Giannasca. One incident had the small crowd rising in appreciation — a dou-

ble save from Tom Quilty and Monie.

Coasties coach John McLafferty said he hoped his young side had learned from the experience. "We made some silly mistakes at the back, and at 3-1 we should have been able to shut things up and hoped for the goal that would put them under pressure in the final stages," he said.

"As it was we couldn't do that because we were too far out of the game."



Tony Giannasca in fine form for the Blue Devils.

substituted on the hour. "Nic has taken a bad knock in the back, and we will have to see whether he can be fit in time for the game against Rockdale Suns next week," he said.

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 5
(Macor 4', 93', Valeri 14', Arranz 44', 59')
COLORBOND COASTIES 1
(Monie 38')

at McKellar Soccer Centre, McKellar

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: 1 Anthony Giannasca, 2 Adrian Dowling, 5 Oscar Zamora (18 Andrew Rakic 55), 6 Jaime Mauro, 8 Elliot Zwangobani, 10 Daniel Macor, 11 David Arranz (19 Daniel Camara 70), 13 Stewart Camara, 15 Matthew Valeri, 17 Stephen Kemp, 25 Nic Purdue (9 Clinton Larfield 60).
Coach: Lino Fiorese.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: 20 Ben Xerri, 2 Josh Maguire, 4 Mitchel Cook, 6 Aron Binskin, 7 Peter Preston (11 Tom Quilty 63), 9 Peter Haynes (18 Nathan Byrn 83), 10 Marc Falzon, 12 Steve Cutler (15 Matt Mitchell 92), 13 James Monie, 14 Chris Fleming, 17 Pat Bradley.

Coach: John McLafferty.
Yellow cards: Devils, Giannasca 29, S. Camara 37, Arranz 56; Coasties: Cutler 37, Fleming 45, Falzon 61, Maguire 67. Referee: Bill Simeonovic.

Assistant Referees: Les O'Donoghue and Damien Johnson. Crowd: 216.

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EDITING: Adam Mark
PRODUCTION: Daniel Kuziow, Eily Vea, Mary Quarley
WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Stuart Veitch, Graham Cooke, Barry Davis
PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Furtado
★ All information is courtesy of SOCCER NSW.

SOCER NSW
Valentine Sports Park
235-257 Meurants Lane,
GLENWOOD, NSW, 2768
Phone: (02) 9629 1800
website: www.soccernsw.com.au

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Penrith Panthers

Canterbury Marrickville Olympic

By Greg Stock

If Canterbury-Marrickville do finish up with a top three spot at season's end, it is games like this that they'll look back on with plenty of heart.

The difference between them winning and drawing or even losing this game, was not a magic piece of individualism, but rather their collective team effort, which sees them sit on the brink of pulling off what many pundits would have thought impossible at the beginning of the season, a top three spot.

On par with the hard running Panthers side

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for most of the game, the Berries true moment of inspiration came rather simply in the 52nd minute when substitute Leigh Gunn swooped on a partially cleared corner and buried his shot.

It wasn't a spectacular goal by any stretch of the imagination, but it was significant and came at a time in the game where Penrith were starting to assert some authority.

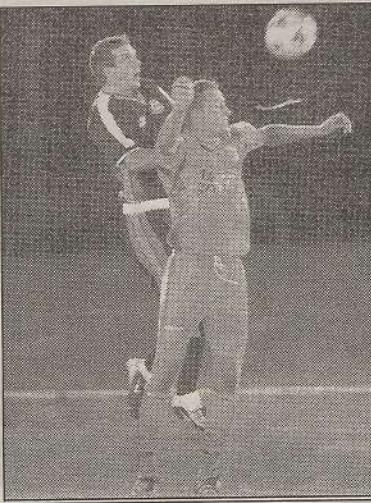
While the goal did ultimately secure the three points, they did have to survive more than a few nervous moments late in the game. In the final ten minutes Berries coach Greg Woodhouse was a very anxious man, watching Jason Sciberras and Luke Tyburski go within a

whisker of a Luke O'Connell free kick which would have seen them snatch an unlikely draw.

Just shading the Panthers for possession and chances, the Berries win was set up by midfielder Alan Picken who was undoubtedly the best player on the park.

Playing against his former club his duel with Daniel McCann proved the difference, unbeatable in the air his presence lifting his team mates from the centre of the park. At the back, Maric, Utjesenovic and Begley did well, holding the lively Danny Hinton till his substitution his partner Jason Sciberras faring little better.

While the game was a very entertaining match the home side did finish the match with ten men after Ryan Noble was sent off for a second bookable offence. His departure two minutes from time the only blemish on an otherwise engrossing contest.



A high flying midfield challenge.

PENRITH PANTHERS
C'BURY-M'VILLE OLYMPIC
(L Gunn 52')

at Gabbie Stadium, Seven Hills

PENRITH PANTHERS: 1.Chad Taylor, 4.Ryan Noble, 6.Daniel Wells, 10.Shane Hammond, 11.Luke O'Connell, 13.Jason Sciberras, 17.Daniel McCann, 19.Danny Hinton (15.Chad Lewis 62'), 20.Osvaldo El Ali, 21.Luke Boyd, 35.Tim O'Connell (3.Luke Tyburski 84').

Coach: Tony Rasmussen

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE: 1.Ivan Neceski, 2.Sasa Utjesenovic, 3.Michael West, 4.Cormack Begley, 5.Tom Maric, 6.Paul Bourke, 7.Con Paradis, 10.Allan Picken, 11.Aheleas Kotsopoulos (9.Leah Gunn 46'), 12.George Nohra, 13.Ben Price.

Coach: Greg Woodhouse.

Yellow Cards: Kotsopoulos 27 Boyd 36 Bourke 60 Noble 76

Red Card: Noble 88'

Referee: Peter Vrakoski
Assistant Referees: Attila Stibinger and Jose Da Silva

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS
(G Moore 9/41)

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES . . .
(S Knight 77')

at Jensen Park, Sefton

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Josevski, Augerinos (Raeburn), R Luksic, Bradley (Trposki), Asanovic (Madigan), Moore, Gomez, G Issa, Wearne, Dos Santos, Talcevski

Unused subs: D Luksic, Marcelino

Yellow Cards: Augerinos, Moore, G Issa
Red Card: Gomez

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Augusto, Dalessandro, Devrim, Mancino (Angievski), Harding, Knight, Agwu, Hawrysiuk, Pellegrini (Dragas), Burgess (Donev), Huseyin

Unused subs: Oygu, Xeureb
Referee: Alex Spirovski

ST GEORGE SAINTS
PARRAMATTA EAGLES
(Kladis 32', Meilak 81', Anderson 88')

at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST. GEORGE: 40.Phil Weston, 3.Nick Boliantis, 4.Evangelos Petratos, 5.Max Sevares (18.Jason Lal 82'), 6.Jose Mendes, 7.George Maglis, 10.Bruno Beddoni, 13.Ali Salim (11.Achileas Markopoulos 66'), 14.Raphael Bove, 15.Zoki Adioski, 19.Abbas Saad (8.Orhan Dincer 11').

Coach: Manny Sianoudakis.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: 1.Brad Swancott, 2.Michael Kladis (17.Adam Anderson 81'), 4.Malcolm Meilak, 5.Mark Reaveley, 6.Daniel Borg, 7.Mauricio Isla, 10.Anthony Mittiga (14.Nathan Rivera 86'), 11.Matthew O'Shea, 13.John Kelso, 15.Ben Delicata, 19.Daniel Cummings (9.Anthony Mondello 86').

Coach: John Calleja.

Yellow Cards: Kladis 17' Beddoni 21' Maglis 71' Meilak 73' Isla 82'

Red Cards: Boliantis 60' Beddoni 61'

Referee: Michael Collins
Assistant Referees: Kurt Ams and Wayne Lenardon. Fourth Official: Nil.

FAIRFIELD BULLS
ROCKDALE CITY SUNS
(R Plesa 39', S Najdoski 30' pen G Trposki 85')

at Nineveh Field, Edensor Park

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Trajcevski, Piesa, Brickell, Apotevski (Talevski), Deighan Bideau, Najdoski, Trposki, Bozinovski, Ju, Dimitrevski

Unused subs: Costiuc, Kalamvokis, Todorovski, Zabaks

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Moore, Snyder (Arrate), Jurcevic, Yildiz, Daley (Van Bentum), Green, Berbis, Borg, Hoenselaars, Cindic, Deur

Unused subs: Hutchings, Nehme

Referee: Simon Przydacz

Bankstown City Lions

Bonnyrigg White Eagles

By Stuart Veitch

Bankstown City Lions secured their first win in six outings with an impressive battling 2-1 win over Bonnyrigg White Eagles.

The White Eagles would have been warm favourites going into the match and their odds must have firmed when former player Robbie Gomez was given his marching orders early in the match.

After tangling with an opponent in an off the ball incident Gomez was given a straight red

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card by referee Alex Spirovski who was acting on the advice of one of his linesman.

However the Lions showed a steely determination that had perhaps been lacking earlier in the season. This, combined with an acrobatic display of goalkeeping from Zlatko Josevski, saw the Lions home for a much needed win in front of what was a very healthy crowd at Jensen Park.

The home side opened the scoring when a long range Elias Augerinos strike was deflected past Bonnyrigg goalkeeper Alexio Augusto with the help of Richard Luksic's boot, as the big defender lurked in a crowded penalty area.



Despite the one man disadvantage the Lions were able to double their advantage with a superb solo goal from Glen Moore. The former Newcastle Breakers midfielder dribbled past several defenders before finishing with aplomb.

The second half saw Bonnyrigg throw everything at their opponents but they struggled to break down the deep-lying Bankstown defence. On the occasions that they did breach their opponents backline, wayward shooting and the heroics of Josevski denied them the opportunity to get back into the game.

Finally Shane Knight pulled a goal back with a half volley hit with typical accuracy low into the back of the net, but it was to be too little too late for the disappointing White Eagles.

Glenn Moore starred for the Lions.

St George Saints

Parramatta Eagles

By Greg Stock

Parramatta Eagles may have picked up three points this week, but they couldn't be further away from a semi-final berth if they tried.

Despite beating a nine man Saints outfit 3-0, the Eagles performance was nothing short of diabolical, their spot in the top five under extreme doubt after such a miserable performance.

In a dull and boring contest against St. George, they hardly got out of first gear, in a match that was more notable for the substandard refereeing performance, rather than for

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any on-field play. Apart from Michael Kladis' exquisite 30-yard screamer, the game limped along aimlessly until referee Michael Collins sent two Saints players from the field inside 60 seconds of each other, to turn the game into a farce.

Nick Boliantis was the first player marched with a straight red card for allegedly swearing while striker Bruno Beddoni followed shortly after for a second bookable offence, when he clashed with John Kelso. The send-offs torpedoed any chance the home side had of pulling off an upset, yet another piece of the old St. George ill-discipline that cost them points. Up until the send-offs, the Saints were largely the

more creative side and with Orhan Dincer the focal point of their attack, they really looked threatening. Taking play to the flanks, Zoki Adioski and Ali Salim were lively, getting in behind their opponent's slow defence and causing more than a few anxious moments.

But after the send-offs their game under-

standably collapsed, the Eagles putting away

two soft goals in the final ten minutes to take

the three points. Malcolm Meilak finding the

empty net from a Daniel Borg cutback to score

the second, Adam Anderson hitting a first time

shot from the edge of the box after a Ben

Delicata cross. The result in danger of an even

bigger blowout if it weren't for Raphael Bove

and Evangelos Petratos clearing shots off the

line.

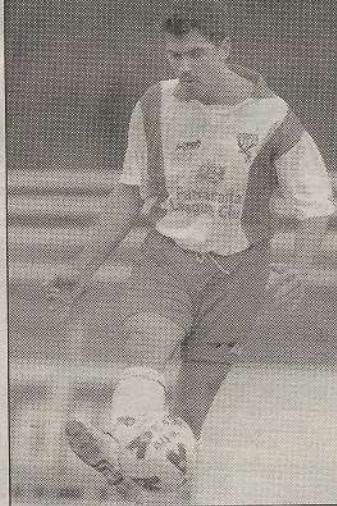
But in the post match analysis it wasn't the

Eagles win that was the talking point, but rather

the two send offs and the five yellow cards

handed out by the referee, which really robbed

this match of any interest.



Michael Kladis scored a 30 yard screamer for the Eagles.

Fairfield Bulls

Rockdale City Suns

By Stuart Veitch

Fairfield Bulls and Rockdale City Suns fought out an entertaining encounter at Nineveh Field before the Suns eventually prevailed by the odd goal in five.

For Suns sweeper Richard Plesa it will be a game he won't forget in a hurry with the former NSL stalwart scoring at both ends, before literally talking his way into an early shower when he was dismissed for some ill-considered remarks to the referee.

Once again the Bulls started the game as

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if they had a point to prove and they opened the scoring when new acquisition from Sydney United, Ante Deur scored with a good strike from 20m. Spase Najdoski soon took his customary position on the score-sheet when he equalised following a handball by Adam Snyder.

Then came the remarkable hat trick for Richard Plesa. First he was the victim of an unfortunate deflection as Deur's shot stuck the former Parramatta Power player and in the process deceiving Suns keeper Peter Trajcevski.

Plesa then found himself the centre of the goalscoring action at the correct end of the



Richard Plesa had an eventful day for the Suns.

park when he latched onto a half cleared corner and stuck an unstoppable shot past Darren Moore.

If that wasn't drama enough, early in the second half Plesa was dismissed for a second bookable offence.

The Bulls sought to take full advantage of their numerical advantage and bombarded the Suns goal but they found Peter Trajcevski in inspired form.

The former Super League goalkeeper of the year denied Marc Hoenselaars, Matthew Borg and Snyder as the Bulls carved out countless chances.

Just when it looked like the points would be shared, the Suns, somewhat against the run of play, put together a quality move to grab a dramatic late winner. Substitute Goran Talevski fed the ball down the flank for Steve Bozinovski whose perfect ball allowed Goce Trposki to finish from close range.

FAIRFIELD BULLS
ROCKDALE CITY SUNS

(R Plesa 39', S Najdoski 30' pen G Trposki 85')

at Nineveh Field, Edensor Park

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Trajcevski, Piesa, Brickell, Apotevski (Talevski), Deighan Bideau, Najdoski, Trposki, Bozinovski, Ju, Dimitrevski

Unused subs: Costiuc, Kalamvokis, Todorovski, Zabaks

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Moore, Snyder (Arrate), Jurcevic, Yildiz, Daley (Van Bentum), Green, Berbis, Borg, Hoenselaars, Cindic, Deur

Unused subs: Hutchings, Nehme

Referee: Simon Przydacz



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FIRST GRADE ROUND 17 RESULTS & TABLE

Belconnen Blue Devils	5	Colorbond Coasties	1
(D Macor 5/93', M Valeri 15', D Arranz 45/59')			
Penrith Panthers	0	Canterbury Marrickville Olympic	1
(L Gunn 52')			
Bankstown City Lions	2	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	1
(G Moore 9/41')			
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	0	Blacktown City Demons	2
(D Reid 86', B Stefan 90')			
St George Saints	0	Parramatta Eagles	3
(M Kladis 32', M Meilak 83', A A Anderson 88')			
Fairfield Bulls	2	Rockdale City Suns	3
(A Deur 13/34')			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	17	11	3	3	36	17	19	36
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	17	9	5	3	37	19	18	32
Canterbury Marrickville	17	8	6	3	34	17	17	30
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	17	8	3	6	35	26	9	27
Parramatta Eagles	17	7	6	4	24	19	5	27
Belconnen Blue Devils	17	7	5	5	31	26	5	26
Rockdale City Suns	17	6	6	5	27	24	3	24
Colorbond Coasties	17	6	3	8	24	45	-21	21
Bankstown City Lions	17	5	4	8	22	35	-13	19
Penrith Panthers	17	5	3	9	23	27	-4	18
St George Saints	17	4	1	12	21	38	-17	13
Fairfield Bulls	17	3	1	13	23	44	-21	10

GRADE 19 ROUND 17 RESULTS & TABLE

Belconnen Blue Devils	1	Colorbond Coasties	0
(I Walden 30')			
Penrith Panthers	3	Canterbury Marrickville Olympic	2
(B Eldridge 2', M Noro 20', L Infant 41')			
Bankstown City Lions	4	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	1
(R Issa 19', S Soleski 33'/51', R Mileski 69')			
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	3	Blacktown City Demons	2
(scorers)			
St George Saints	3	Parramatta Eagles	2
(G Lagoudakis 28/52', J Permall 74')			
Fairfield Bulls	0	Rockdale City Suns	2
(scorers)			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	17	13	2	2	52	17	35	41
Parramatta Eagles	17	11	3	3	34	17	17	36
Rockdale City Suns	17	10	3	4	32	23	9	33
Penrith Panthers	17	8	5	4	33	22	11	29
Canterbury Marrickville	17	8	3	6	34	27	7	27
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	16	8	3	5	29	23	6	27
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	17	7	3	7	34	27	7	24
Belconnen Blue Devils	17	6	5	6	24	27	-3	23
St George Saints	17	3	4	10	16	32	-16	13
Central Coast Coasties	17	3	4	10	20	39	-19	13
Fairfield Bulls	16	2	3	11	15	42	-27	9
Bankstown City Lions	17	1	4	12	15	42	-27	9

ROUND 18

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Bankstown City Lions	v Penrith Panthers	Sat 5 April	7.00pm	Jensen Park
Central Coast Coasties	v A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat 5 April	7.00pm	Pluim Park
Blacktown City Demons	v St George Saints	Sat 5 April	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Parramatta Eagles	Sat 5 April	7.00pm	Serbian Centre
Rockdale City Suns	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 5 April	7.00pm	John Crehan Park
Cbury-M'ville Olympic	v Fairfield Bulls	Sun 6 April	3.00pm	Henson Park

GRADE 19	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Bankstown City Lions	v Penrith Panthers	Sat 5 April	5.00pm	Jensen Park
Central Coast Coasties	v A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat 5 April	5.00pm	Pluim Park
Blacktown City Demons	v St George Saints	Sat 5 April	5.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Parramatta Eagles	Sat 5 April	5.00pm	Serbian Centre
Rockdale City Suns	v Belconnen Blue Devils	Sat 5 April	5.00pm	John Crehan Park
Cbury-M'ville Olympic	v Fairfield Bulls	Sun 6 April	1.00pm	Henson Park

TOP GOALSCORERS

- 12 - Leigh Gunn (Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic),
- 11 - Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns), James Monie (Central Coast Colorbond Coasties), Spase Najdoski (Rockdale City Suns),
- 10 - Zlatko Arambasic (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers), Luke Roodenberg (Blacktown City Demons), Colin Luff (Blacktown City Demons/Bankstown City), Daniel Macor (Belconnen Blue Devils),
- 9 - Bruno Beddoni (St. George Saints),
- 7 - Robert Todorovski (Rockdale City Suns), Aaron Burgess (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Marc Hoenselaars (Fairfield Bulls),

FROM THE SIDELINES *By Greg Stock*

*The Coasties trip to Canberra was anything but a success after their 5-1 loss to Belconnen on Sunday night. The club did everything right in the leadup to the match electing to travel on Friday evening and staying overnight in a bid to keep the side focused on the job at hand. Sadly the home side had other ideas, the loss just about ending any post season ambitions for the Coasties.

*The St. George first grade squad had a night off from training last week, venturing out to the Sydney Entertainment Centre to watch the Sydney Kings in action against the Townsville Crocs. The Kings did lose the game but according to coach Manny Spanoudakis, "a great night was had by all." Spanoudakis bid a very quick exit from St George Stadium on Sunday after watching

two of his more senior players get sent off in an ordinary display against Parramatta Eagles. Bruno Beddoni and Nick Boliantis have an appointment with the judiciary while Vince Savoca has an appeal on this week. With injuries to Ralph Bove and Abbas Saad, it could be case of the walking wounded this week when they face Blacktown City.

*The grandstand at Lambert Park is just about finished with APIA-Leichhardt all set to host it's reopening for the round 19 match with Rockdale City Suns. More news on this one next week.

*Local Rockdale City Suns fans will be pleased to know that their round 20 match up with St. George has been moved to St. George Stadium. The game will still be a Suns home game and is designed to cater for

their local fans in and around the St George area. Kick-off times will be 1.00pm and 3.00pm.

*More news on the tragedy surrounding former Eagles midfielder Ballamadou Conde, now living in Singapore. Conde and his wife Aminata recently lost his 14-month old daughter, their second such loss in the past two years. A popular player with the Singapore Armed Forces club, fellow S-League players have all pitched in, passing around the hat and raising over \$1,000 for the former Guinean international and his wife.

*Hot on the heels of the transfer of St George defender Sebastian Sinozic comes news that ex-Bulls midfielder Andy Ravanello is off for his second season in the

United States, just up the road for the Western Massachusetts Pioneers. Sinozic left last weekend for Syracuse where the temperature sits around the 5C mark this time of year!

*Transfer news this week, last years Silver Medal winner for the 2002 Super League player of the year Tim Gledhill has returned to his former club Hajduk Wanderers after spending much of the Premier League season with Parramatta Eagles. "We are sorry to lose a player of Tim's ability" said Eagles coach John Calleja, "but it was a decision we had to make and we wish him all the best with Hajduk." Gledhill's return to his former club comes at a good time for the Wanderers who are missing Peter Farac for four weeks with injury.

*The Winter Super League has a new

entertainer and it's not Peter 'The General' Sarakakis or Uni coach Stewart Porter after a few beers. Nigerian born striker Kingsley Nwangomo is quickly becoming a real fan favourite for the Stanmore Hawks faithful with his double back flips after scoring goals something to see. His effort after scoring the winning goal from the penalty spot against Sydney University on Sunday a real 10 out of 10 effort according to his team mate and captain John Theodoropoulos.

*Speaking of things Super League, it is great to see Sharks midfielder Adam Mamolitti back in action. Having served a four week suspension after an indiscretion for last years side Hakoah, he started the game against Hajduk alongside midfielder Paul Candelori, was the best player on the park.



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ROUND 18 PREVIEW

Bankstown City Lions
vs
Penrith PanthersSaturday 5th April, 2003 — 7.00pm
JENSEN PARK, SEFTON

Bankstown City Lions are at home at Jensen Park for the second week in succession, when they host the Penrith Panthers on Saturday night.

The Lions showed lots of character to bounce back from a humiliating defeat against Canterbury, to beat Bonnyrigg White Eagles last week. Just as siblings reserve their most ferocious fights for each other, so too do players and coaches always like to put one over their former clubs.

This may explain some of the motivation for the Lions hard-fought win last week, although former Bonnyrigg players Alex Asanovic

and Robbie Gomez possibly took things a little too competitively. Gomez, playing in only his second game back from suspension, will be missing for a few weeks more after picking up a red card last week, and Asanovic must be in some doubt after failing to complete the match himself.

This leaves Bankstown in a bit of a bind for a forward line capable of scoring goals, not that Penrith Panthers coach Tony Rassmussan will be too concerned.

His side has been finding goals hard to come by in recent weeks, with an odd goal deciding the previous



two games. With Rod Hutchinson absent over the past weeks, the responsibility for goals has fallen to Danny Hinton and the veteran Ossie El Ali.

With both sides still a mathematical chance to make the finals (if not a realistic chance), this game will be the nail in the coffin of the season for the loser, and will give the winner another week of hope. The loser will need to then focus on the magical number 26 to ensure that relegation is not part of their vocabulary.

A difficult one to pick, but Bankstown at home should prevail.

Colorbond Coasters
vs
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt TigersSaturday 5th April, 2003 — 7.00pm
PLUIM PARK, LISAROW

If ever there was a team to show the same sorts of character traits as Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde, it is the Coasters.

One week they can blow the opposition off the park, next week they are flat-out keeping pace, losing valuable points to the likes of Fairfield and Penrith, but knocking over Bankstown who amongst others have beaten Bonnyrigg.

When it comes to putting a form line through them the best way would be to consult the old dartboard, but coach John McLafferty is a tough cookie and he'll be confident he can lift his side for one last supreme

effort against the Tigers.

Speaking of A.P.I.A., their push for the minor premiership took a savage beating in the space of five minutes last week, allowing the Demons to net twice to take the three points.

The only way they can reclaim lost ground is by winning their remaining five games and hoping Blacktown do the unthinkable and lose two of theirs.

As mentioned elsewhere I am not a betting man, but if I were I wouldn't like to lay anything less than 100-1 on that eventuality, meaning that A.P.I.A. need to be only concerned with holding down a top three

spot to qualify for the double chance in the Semi-Finals. They hold a two point break over the Berries and a five-point break over Bonnyrigg and Parramatta Eagles, and that should be enough to achieve that aim.

But back to their clash with the Coasters and after being ruffled by a late Demons flurry, the A.P.I.A. boys can expect no peace from coach Les De Celis on the training paddock this week.

That should translate into plenty of goals against the Coasters with the tip being a comprehensive 3-0 victory.

Blacktown City Demons
vs
St George SaintsSaturday 5th April, 2003 — 7.00pm
GABBIE STADIUM, BLACKTOWN

If ever a game looked all over before the opening whistle it is this one. Rocked by injuries and suspensions the poor old Saints could well have a spare parts side on the park this week, and with Blacktown in the middle of a purple patch, this game could get really ugly.

With Socceroo Abbas Saad and Raphael Bove only considered 50/50 chances, coach Manny Spanoudakis might need to comb through his under 19s squad for some reinforcements.

Midfielder Vince Savoca has an appeal on his four week suspension

this week, so no guarantees there, with Nick Boliantis and Bruno Beddoni earning themselves at least a week off after being sent off against the Eagles.

Blacktown continue to keep their renaissance going and after knocking over Leichhardt with two late goals have a four point buffer at the top of the Premier League table.

With Colin Luff and Luke Roodenberg back to their best they have two of the best strikers in the league capable of dismantling any side.

The big question this week, is motivation and if the Demons are

switched on they could really rack up some impressive numbers.

I don't mean to sound harsh to St. George but realistically a trip to the Gabbie is never easy especially when you could be six top line players down.

If I were a betting man, and I'm not (nudge nudge wink wink), I'd put the house on Blacktown and the scoreboard attendant to be replaced midway through the second half with a bad case of RSI.

Manny probably also needs to call Chris Cowley to figure out how to keep 11 players on the pitch for the full 90 minutes to prevent a blowout.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles
vs
Parramatta EaglesSaturday 5th April, 2003 — 7.00pm
SERBIAN CENTRE, BONNYRIGG

The Parramatta Eagles travel to the Serbian Centre on Saturday night as winners, having disposed of second bottom St George which offered more resistance than should have been permitted, given that St George went a good portion of the game with just nine men.

It's been an inconsistent season all round for the Eagles, who have not been able to put together a reasonable run of good form. The price they pay for their uneven performances is to be hanging onto a place in the finals by a thread.

Both Belconnen and Rockdale lay

waiting to pounce on a slip-up from the Eagles, and take over their spot in the final five. The fortunes of the hosts, the Bonnyrigg White Eagles have seen a dramatic turnaround over the past month.

Just a fortnight ago, Bonnyrigg was riding the crest of a wave, having defeated then top-placed A.P.I.A. Leichhardt and following up with a win on the road at Canterbury Marrickville.

Just when it seemed that nothing could stop them in a late tilt at the premiership, Bonnyrigg has now lost two on the trot to two clubs in the lower regions of the table. After last

Sunday's defeat away at Bankstown, coach Ljube Jancev has been asked by the Bonnyrigg committee to front up with a "please explain," sure to be a frank and open exchange of views.

This game ended at 1-1 in the first round, and it's difficult to pick a winner this time around as well.

With Robbie Angievski and Zac Donev still on the bench for the White Eagles, it seems that Bonnyrigg has too much firepower as well as the motivation to overcome the Parramatta Eagles in front of their own fans at the Serbian Centre.

Rockdale City Suns
vs
Belconnen Blue DevilsSaturday 5th April, 2003 — 7.00pm
JOHN CREHAN PARK, CRINGILA

The Suns returned to the winners circle last week finding a winner in the last five minutes to put away a plucky Fairfield.

Up till then, their form had been ordinary with some wishy washy performances against the likes of Canterbury and Bonnyrigg undoing their good work in the first half of the season.

There is no bigger occasion than their home game against Belconnen, two competition points further up the ladder than they are with everything to play for.

Lose this week and their season is just about over, coach Bill Pilovski

will be keen to drum that into his charges at training this week.

Belconnen's destruction of the Coasters last week sounded an ominous warning with the top five race really hotting up.

A win against the Suns this week could see them slip into the top five if there is a result between Bonnyrigg and Parramatta Eagles.

Given the way those two sides have been going, that is entirely possible, though the Blue Devils will need to adopt a more attacking frame of mind away from home if they are to take the three points.

The drive from Canberra to

Wollongong is about an hour less than the Blue Devils usual four-hour jaunt to away games in Sydney.

It might be half the travel time, and if they arrive in better shape than they're recent forays away, and with their attacking boots on, this could really be a rip-snorter.

It should also be interesting to watch Spase and Daniel Macor get back into form after goals last week.

Given the closeness of the two teams I am not going to stick my neck out, preferring to take a comfortable position on the fence and go for the 1-1 draw.

Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic
vs
Fairfield BullsSunday 6th April, 2003 — 3.00pm
HENSON PARK, MARRICKVILLE

Canterbury Marrickville enter taints bottom placed Fairfield Bulls at Henson Park this Sunday afternoon, and should account for the Bulls without too much difficulty.

With the Bonnyrigg White Eagles failing to pick up a point at Jensen Park last week, Canterbury Marrickville have quietly opened up a bit of a gap on the rest of the pack as they sit on third place on the table.

However, coach Greg Woodhouse is taking nothing for granted. "They are all hard games," he said after last weekend's hard fought victory over Penrith Panthers.

"Sometimes it can be harder to beat the bottom sides than it is to beat the top ones. It really just depends who is most switched on at the time." Woodhouse's side has been travelling pretty well lately, having lost just once in the past eight games, although there are some injury concerns.

Dynamic left sided midfielder John Kyriazopoulos is rated only a 50-50 chance to start after a calf strain, and Archie Kotsopoulos is also in doubt. After hobbling off early in the game three weeks ago, competition leading scorer Leigh Gunn has been unable to get a start

for the Berries, with Woodhouse having the luxury of maintaining a winning side.

That hasn't stopped him scoring in twice from the bench though, including the winner last week. Fairfield Bulls have found some steel since Hugh McCrory took over as coach, and they gave Rockdale City Suns a run for their money last week. Unfortunately for the Bulls a very late Rockdale winner robbed them of a valuable point, and they came away empty handed. While anything can happen in a game of football, it is difficult to see them doing any better at Henson Park this week.



SOCER NSW



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE REVIEW

Round Five of the Winter Super League produced some very interesting results, starting off with two of the leagues heavyweights squaring off under lights at Cromer Park. Manly and AC United are considered by many to be championship material and in front of a bumper crowd they did not disappoint.

Eight goals in ninety minutes of football is great entertainment in anybody's language with a frantic final five minutes the ultimate climax. Defence for both sides was virtually non-existent, Zia Younan picking up an early goal and a penalty, midfielder Chris Giometti scoring one and then in the 87th minute nailing a second in a goalmouth scramble to give his side a 4-3 lead.

But the Dolphins went forward from the resulting kick-off; Justin Creighton on the end of a well-worked move to leave the game tied up at 4 goals apiece.

On Sunday afternoon, Crescent Star continued along on their winning way disposing of a plucky Rams side in Campbelltown. With Steve Tolios unbeatable between the sticks, Crescent Star pushed forward at every opportunity netting early via Yavus Ekinci in the 9th minute and again ten minutes after the break. Tanju Balabanel on the receiving end of a defence splitting pass from Ekinci who is really stamping himself as an early favorite for this years Silver Medal.

At Hajduk Stadium, John Turner's Sharks put in one of their best defensive efforts for the season thus far, to hold out the fast finishing Wanderers. Former Sydney Olympic striker Derek Poimer turning his defencer brilliantly to score the only goal of the game in the 13th minute, the shot hitting the bar but bouncing down to cross the line. For the remainder of the

match, the Wanderers came forward in numbers and with Tim Gledhill back in vogue gave goalkeeper Frank Mikuletic a few anxious moments. Best for the Sharks Paul Candelori in the engine room and Adam Mamoliti who controlled the right hand side brilliantly.

After some indifferent performances in the first four rounds, the Ian Gillan coached Fraser Park Dragons finally clicked into gear, saving a very disappointing Ryde City in the process.

Gunners goalkeeper Peter Sestak had an unhappy afternoon gifting two goals, the first to Tony Faria when the misjudged a save from a very tame shot, the second to Manny Papageorgiou when he miscued a goalkick. But that aside, he had few friends, only Simon Turner and Andy Stratford able to claim any honour in the shellacking. Greg Collins, the ex Ryde midfielder, was unstoppable down the right hand side laying on two goals and scoring one himself, while Ian King again had another strong outing.

At Arlington Oval, Dulwich Hill picked up their first win of the season with a strong second half display against the Minotaurs. After an even first half was locked 1-1 at half-time, the home side cut loose in the second, new signing Ben Burrows picking up two goals and setting up another for his forward partner Jean-Loop Rousseau.

Veteran Jim Melissourgos tried hard for the Minotaurs his 28th minute goal a sensational strike, but sadly his hardwork was in vain.

At Wentworth Park, Sydney University were unlucky not to lead 3 or 4 nil at half-time after spending most of the half camped deep inside the Hawks half. Daisuke Nakayame giving them a 25th minute lead when he was able to thread a shot through a sea of legs in a packed

penalty box and hit the top left hand corner. But the second half saw a Stanmore revival, captain courageous John Theodoropoulos scoring his first goal for many years when he smashed a 30-yard screamer from a defensive clearance.

The win coming deep into stoppage time when Kingsley Nwangumo put away a penalty after Neil Phillipou was bought down by goalkeeper Matt Craw in a clumsy incident.

Nwangumo celebrating in fine style with a double back flip. The bad news for the Hawks was the back injury to goalkeeper Peter Spathis, which saw him, stretched from the field.

With three teams holding the competition lead, round six could well see the leading chances start to sort themselves out. Stanmore Hawks playing Manly at Arlington Oval looks to be quite inviting while Stewart Porter will

again be without leading light Rob Smithies when his side takes on Crescent Star.

Highflying AC United will host Dulwich Hill, while MSC Liverpool is at home in the southern derby against Macarthur Rams. Ryde City meet Hajduk Wanderers while the Minotaurs will entertain the Dragons at Rockdale Ildien Sports Centre, Sutherland having the bye.



Ryde City Gunners will need to go back to the drawing board after last weekends' shock loss.

WINTER SUPER & STATE LEAGUE RESULTS & TABLES

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE - ROUND 5:

FIRST GRADE: Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 (J Tee 14/56m pen D Rosenthal 52m J Creighton 88m) AC United 4 (Z Younan 6m/34m pen C Giometti 75/87m), Macarthur Rams 0 Sydney Crescent Star 2 (Y Ekinci 9m T Balabanel 55m), Sydney University 1 (D Nakayama 25m) Stanmore Hawks 2 (J Theodoropoulos 47m K Nwangumo 94m), Hajduk Wanderers 0 Sutherland Sharks 1 (D Poimer 13m), Fraser Park Dragons 8 (A Faria 30m B Petrovski 44m G Collins 50m E Papageorgiou 53/72m C Mayberry 58m I King 75m D O'Han 79m) Ryde City 0, Dulwich Hill 4 (C Exahros 32m B Burrows 57/85m J Rousseau 74m) Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 (J Melissourgos 28m).

GRADE 21: Macarthur Rams 0 Sydney Crescent Star 1, Sydney University 0 Stanmore Hawks 2, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Sutherland Sharks 1, Fraser Park Dragons 6 Ryde City 0, Dulwich Hill 1 Hurstville City Minotaurs 0.

GRADE 19: Macarthur Rams 3 Sydney Crescent Star 8, Sydney University 2 Stanmore Hawks 1, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Sutherland Sharks 2, Fraser Park Dragons 1 Ryde City 3, Dulwich Hill 1 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Sydney CSr	4	3	1	0	11	3	8 - 10
AC United	5	3	1	1	15	11	4 - 10
Stanmore Hawks	4	3	1	0	6	3	3 - 10
Sutherland Sharks	5	2	3	0	6	4	2 - 9
Manly Warringah	5	2	1	2	13	9	4 - 7
Fraser Park Dragons	5	2	1	2	10	7	3 - 7
Sydney University	4	2	0	2	4	4	0 - 6
Ryde City	5	2	0	3	8	15	-7 - 6
Hajduk Wanderers	5	1	2	2	3	4	-1 - 5
Dulwich Hill	5	1	1	3	10	11	-1 - 4
Hurstville City Minotaurs	5	1	1	3	5	12	-7 - 4
MSC Liverpool	4	1	0	3	4	7	-3 - 3
Macarthur Rams	4	1	0	3	4	9	-5 - 3

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Manly Warringah	5	4	1	0	12	5	7 - 13
Fraser Park Dragons	5	4	0	1	17	4	13 - 12
Sutherland Sharks	5	3	1	1	12	6	10 - 10
Dulwich Hill	5	3	0	2	8	4	4 - 9
Hajduk Wanderers	5	2	2	1	8	3	5 - 8
AC United	5	2	2	1	10	8	2 - 8
Stanmore Hawks	4	2	1	1	5	3	2 - 7
Ryde City	4	2	1	1	5	3	2 - 7
MSC Liverpool	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1 - 5
Macarthur Rams	4	0	3	1	5	6	-1 - 3
Hurstville City Minotaurs	5	1	0	4	3	10	-7 - 3
Sydney CS	4	1	0	3	3	13	-10 - 3
Sydney University	4	0	1	3	2	10	-8 - 1
Ryde City	5	0	1	4	1	13	-12 - 1

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Manly Warringah	5	4	0	1	10	3	7 - 12
AC United	5	4	0	1	12	6	6 - 12
Sydney CS	4	3	1	0	16	6	10 - 10
Sutherland Sharks	5	3	0	2	8	7	1 - 9
Ryde City	5	3	0	2	8	8	0 - 9
Sydney University	4	2	1	1	7	6	1 - 7
Fraser Park Dragons	4	2	1	1	5	4	1 - 7
Dulwich Hill	5	1	2	2	5	5	0 - 5
Hajduk Wanderers	5	1	1	3	6	11	-5 - 4
AC United	5	1	1	3	6	11	-5 - 4
Stanmore Hawks	4	2	1	1	7	6	1 - 7
Ryde City	5	1	1	2	10	7	-3 - 3
MSC Liverpool	4	1	0	3	4	7	-3 - 3
Macarthur Rams	4	0	3	1	5	6	-1 - 3
Hurstville City Minotaurs	5	1	0	4	3	10	-7 - 3
Sydney CS	4	1	0	3	3	13	-10 - 3
Sydney University	4	0	1	3	2	10	-8 - 1
Ryde City	5	0	1	4	1	13	-12 - 1

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Mt Pritchard	5	4	1	0	22	5	17 - 13
Schofields Scorpions	5	4	1	0	21	5	16 - 13
Wanderers Cedars	5	4	0	1	17	3	14 - 12
Hills United	5	3	1	1	10	5	5 - 10
Northern Tigers	5	3	1	1	8	4	4 - 10
Bathurst '75	5	3	0	2	7	6	1 - 9
Hurstville ZSC	5	2	2	1	8	4	4 - 8
Nepean Association	5	2	2	1	8	7	1 - 8
Liverpool Bossy	5	2	0	3	10	12	-2 - 6
Mt Druitt Town	5	1	0	4	5	13	-8 - 3
White City	5	1	0	4	8	17	-9 - 3
Belmore Hercules	5	1	0	4	6	18	-12 - 3
Wollongong United	5	1	0	4	5	20	-15 - 3
Western Rage	5	0	0	5	4	20	-16 - 0

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
University of NSW	5	4	1	0	14	4	10 - 13
Concord FC	5	4	0	1	14	4	10 - 12
Springwood SC	5	3	2	0	16	5	11 - 11
Mingara Lakers	5	3	1	1	11	5	6 - 10
Greystanes SC	5	3	1	1	9	7	2 - 10
Blacktown Assoc.	5	3	0	2	11	6	5 - 9
Greenisland SC	5	2	2	1	11	9	2 - 8
Western Red Devils	5	2	2	1	10	12	-2 - 8
Hawkesbury City	5	2	0	3	12	11	1 - 6
Camden Tigers	5	1	2	2	9	12	-3 - 5
Parramatta City	5	1	0	4	7	17	-10 - 3
Hakoah	5	0	2	3	6	13	-7 - 2
Auburn Star	5	0	1	4	7	18	-11 - 1
Sporting SCC	5	0	0	5	2	16	-14 - 0

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD Pts
Nepean Association	5	5	0	0	19	2	17 - 15
Mt Pritchard	5	4	0	1	17	3	14 - 12
Hills United	5	4	0	1	11	3	8 - 12
Bathurst '75	5	3	1	1	14		

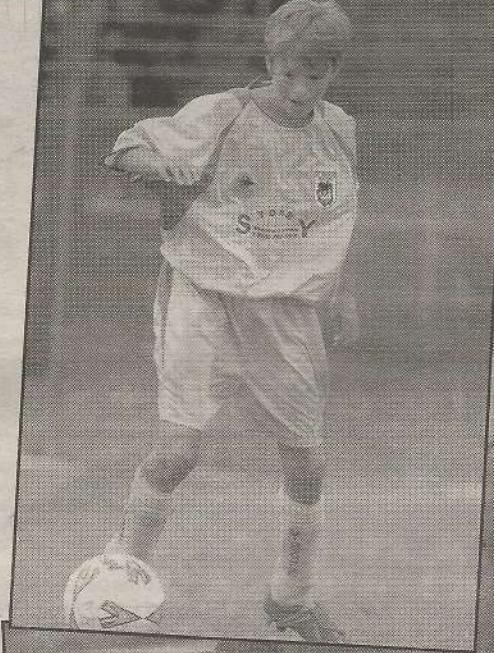


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YOUTH LEAGUE PHOTO GALLERY

ACTION FROM HADJUK WANDERERS AND ST GEORGE SAINTS



Due to technical difficulties, the Youth League Review will not appear in this week's edition of ABSW. Soccer NSW apologises for this inconvenience and assures that the Youth League Review will appear on the Soccer NSW website (www.soccernsw.com.au) and will return next week.

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PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 5:

GRADE 12: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Olympic Sharks 4, Marconi Stallions 3 Northern Spirit 2, Bankstown City Cubs 1 Newcastle United 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sydney United 1 Parramatta Eagles 0, Central Coast Coasters 1 Penrith Panthers 2, Blacktown City Demons 5 Southern Branch YL 0.

GRADE 13: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Olympic Sharks 7, Marconi Stallions 1 Northern Spirit 5, Bankstown City Cubs 0 Newcastle United 2, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sydney United 0 Parramatta Eagles 3, Central Coast Coasters 2 Penrith Panthers 0, Blacktown City Demons 4 Southern Branch YL 1.

GRADE 14: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Olympic Sharks 1, Marconi Stallions 3 Northern Spirit 2, Bankstown City Cubs 1 Newcastle United 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Wollongong Wolves 3, Sydney United 1 Parramatta Eagles 1, Central Coast Coasters 2 Penrith Panthers 1, Blacktown City Demons 3 Southern Branch YL 1.

GRADE 15: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 Olympic Sharks 2, Marconi Stallions 0 Northern Spirit 1, Bankstown City Cubs 1 Newcastle United 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 3 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sydney United 1 Parramatta Eagles 0, Central Coast Coasters 1 Penrith Panthers 0, Blacktown City Demons 0 Southern Branch YL 0.

GRADE 16: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Olympic Sharks 2, Marconi Stallions 4 Northern Spirit 0, Bankstown City Cubs 3 Newcastle United 3, Sutherland Shire Sharks 1 Wollongong Wolves 3, Sydney United 2 Parramatta Eagles 2, Central Coast Coasters 3 Penrith Panthers 1, Blacktown City Demons 1 Southern Branch YL 1.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Olympic Sharks	5	5	0	0	16	4	12	15
Blacktown City	5	5	0	0	14	2	12	15
Northern Spirit	5	4	0	1	15	7	8	12
Marconi Stallions	5	3	1	1	12	5	7	10
Parramatta Eagles	5	3	0	2	9	6	3	9
Wollongong Wolves	5	2	3	0	5	2	3	9
Penrith Panthers	5	2	1	2	4	4	0	7
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	5	2	0	3	7	10	-3	6
Sydney United	5	2	0	3	7	11	-4	6
Newcastle United	5	1	2	2	8	9	-1	5
Sutherland Shire	5	1	0	4	5	13	-8	3
Central Coast	5	0	1	4	2	8	-6	1
Bankstown City	5	0	1	4	2	11	-9	1
Southern Branch YL	5	0	1	4	1	15	-14	1

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	5	5	0	0	14	3	11	15
Olympic Sharks	5	4	1	0	21	3	18	13
Northern Spirit	5	4	0	1	26	6	20	12
Blacktown City	5	4	0	1	15	5	10	12
Newcastle United	5	4	0	1	7	2	5	12
Wollongong Wolves	5	3	1	1	19	3	16	10
Sutherland Shire	5	2	2	1	10	7	3	8
Marconi Stallions	5	2	0	3	10	12	-2	6
Central Coast	5	2	0	3	4	13	-9	6
Bankstown City Cubs	5	1	0	4	3	11	-8	3
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	5	1	0	4	3	20	-17	3
Penrith Panthers	5	0	1	4	3	11	-8	1
Southern Branch YL	5	0	1	4	4	26	-22	1
Sydney United	5	0	0	5	2	19	-17	0

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Wollongong Wolves	5	5	0	0	17	6	11	15
Blacktown City	5	4	0	1	11	4	7	12
Marconi Stallions	5	3	1	1	7	5	2	10
Olympic Sharks	5	2	2	1	8	5	5	8
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	5	2	2	1	7	6	1	8
Parramatta Eagles	5	2	2	1	5	4	1	8
Northern Spirit	5	2	1	2	9	10	-1	7
Sydney United	5	1	2	2	8	6	2	5
Bankstown City	5	1	2	2	7	8	-1	5
Sutherland Shire	5	1	2	2	5	7	-2	5
Central Coast	5	1	2	2	4	6	-2	5
Newcastle United	5	1	2	2	5	8	-3	5
Penrith Panthers	5	1	0	4	5	12	-7	3
Southern Branch YL	5	0	0	5	4	17	-13	0

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Olympic Sharks	5	5	0	0	11	2	9	15
Northern Spirit	5	4	0	1	13	4	9	12
Marconi Stallions	5	4	0	1	10	5	5	12
Sutherland Shire	5	3	1	1	8	6	2	10
Wollongong Wolves	5	3	0	2	10	5	5	9
Parramatta Eagles	5	3	0	2	9	6	3	9
Blacktown City	5	2	1	2	10	4	6	7
Bankstown City	5	1	3	1	4	4	0	6
Central Coast	5	2	0	3	3	8	-5	6
Newcastle United	5	1	2	2	5	8	-3	5
Penrith Panthers	5	1	0	4	5	12	-7	3
Southern Branch YL	5	0	2	3	6	11	-5	2
Sydney United	5	1	1	3	5	11	-6	4
Newcastle United	5	0	3	2	5	10	-5	3
Penrith Panthers	5	0	2	3	6	11	-5	2
Southern Branch YL	5	0	0	5	2	16	-14	0

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 17

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Wollongong Wolves	5	4	1	0	12	5	7	13
Blacktown City	5	4	1	0	11	5	6	13
Olympic Sharks	5	3	1	1	13	5	8	10
Bankstown City	5	3	1	1	10	4	6	10
Marconi Stallions	5	2	1	2	11	5	6	7
Northern Spirit	5	2	1	2	10	8	2	7
Sydney United	5	2	1	2	12	13	-1	7
Newcastle United	5	1	3	1	6	6	0	6
Parramatta Eagles	5	1	2	2	7	7	0	5
Penrith Panthers	5	1	1	3	6	11	-5	4
Central Coast	5	1	1	3	4	11	-7	4
Southern Branch YL	5	0	1	4	3	19	-16	1

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Olympic Sharks	25	19	4	2	69	17	52	61
Blacktown City	25	19	2	4	61	20	49	
Wollongong Wolves	25	17	5	3	63	21	42	56
Northern Spirit	25	16	2	7	73	35	38	50
Parramatta Eagles	25	14	4	4	44	26		



SOCER NSW



J-P's Coaching Tips

Hi Everyone,

As you are reading this article, I am in Europe with the NSW Institute of Sport men's soccer squad. This tour is an extremely important part of the NSWIS program and men's head coach Kelly Cross has been preparing his boys methodically over the past 5 months for this trip.

The squad will be testing themselves against youth squads from Borussia Dortmund (Germany), Bayern Leverkusen (Germany), Feyenoord (Holland), Ajax Amsterdam (Holland), PSV Eindhoven (Holland), Malmö (Sweden) and Racing Genk (Belgium). We will keep you up to date with the progress of the boys next week.

But back to news closer to home. Last week we held a special coaching course for some very special people. 20 current NSL players from Parramatta Power, Northern Spirit, Wollongong Wolves, Marconi and Sydney United came out to Valentine Sports Park to

complete their Youth Coaching Licence. It was also great to see former Socceroo captain Alex Tobin amongst the class showing that you can always learn a little more about the game whatever level you have played.

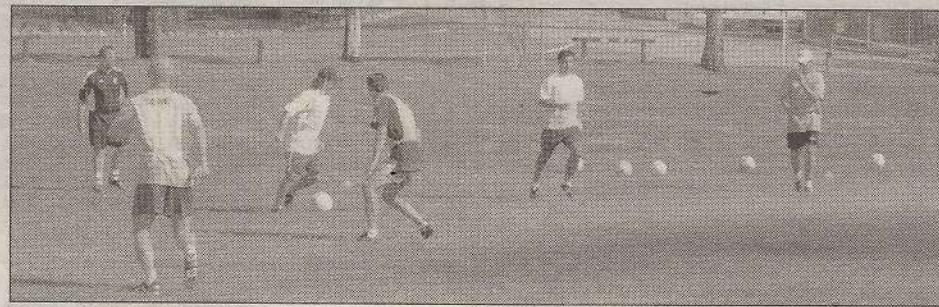
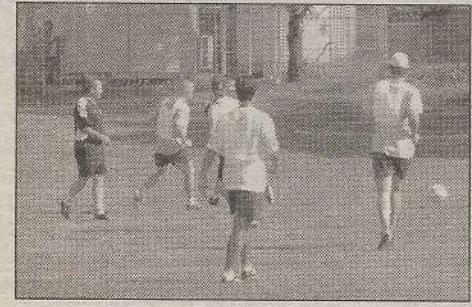
Also a big thank you to Oscar Gonzalez who served as the instructor for the course and he made sure the boys all participated thoroughly throughout. In fact some of the training games had the spice of an NSL grand final!! This is the first time that we have held such a course for our elite players, and the feedback we got means that it definitely won't be the last.

*That's all for this week.
Until next week,
Happy coaching.*

Jean Paul de Marigny
Coaching and Development Manager
Soccer NSW



NSL players Youth Coaching Licence Class of 2003.



Coaching instructor, Oscar Gonzalez, puts the NSL players through their paces at the Youth Coaching Licence Course at Valentine Sports Park last week.



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- Chance to be identified for COERVER Elite squad trials in September 2003

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AUSTRALIAN DEAF SOCCER TITLES 2003

The NSW Deaf Soccer Association is proud to announce that the Australian Deaf Soccer Titles will be held in the City of Bankstown at the famous Clapham Road facility...Jensen Park, the home to the NSW Premier League club, the Bankstown City Lions Soccer FC.

The event will be held in two formats, Seven-a-Side National Titles and the Southern Cross Shield which is the major 11-a-Side Tournament. The National Titles will run from Saturday 12th April 2003 to Sunday 20th April 2003.

The NSW Deaf Soccer Association is overwhelmed by the phenomenal support it has received to date from the Bankstown City Council and more so the efforts of the Deputy Mayor of the City of Bankstown, Mr. Grant Lee in supporting & securing the rights of this fabulous event. The hono-

rable Grant Lee stated 'To be able to host National Titles is an honor. The City of Bankstown has 1st class facilities covering all major sports including soccer and we know that hosting this event will showcase our local sporting and business infrastructure and also boost our local economy during the course of the National Titles.'

The coach of the NSW Deaf Soccer team and tournament organiser, Mr. Michael Katzakis, would also like to sincerely thank Soccer NSW for all of their support to date in assisting us with the event.

"Events like these always need special assistance so when you know you have the support of not just the biggest but also the best sporting body in Australia, ie. Soccer NSW, you know all will go well."

Michael also made mention of the tremendous help he received from Robert Waddell, Michael Quaraby, John Hedison and the staff of Soccer NSW and

would like to thank them for their efforts and generosity.

The event is also proud to announce MAZDA (NSW) as a tournament sponsor. The Patron of the NSW Deaf Soccer Association, Mr. Louie Apostolovski, made the special announcement at a press conference during the week. He stated that 'having MAZDA (NSW) come on board as a tournament sponsor was a major coup and a sign of the professionalism from the board at the NSW Deaf Soccer Association.'

"It's not always that you get the opportunity to be associated with such a world-class organisation as Mazda and we are proud and very thankful of this," said Apostolovski.

For further details, stay tuned to the Soccer NSW website (www.soccernsw.com) for up to date information in relation to this event and progress results, match previews and reviews, during the course of the event.

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WORLD NEWS



ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

It seems that the coaching merry-go-round in Italy has started and rumours are flying around all over the place.

Despite an impressive position on the Serie A ladder Inter boss, Hector Cuper, is still subject to speculation.

Inter are second behind Juventus and still in the quarter-finals of the Champions League but there are many who are willing to speculate that he will not be there next year.

Some even go as far as saying that unless Inter win either the Italian Scudetto or the Champions League, then Cuper will be out of a job.

Inter president Massimo Moratti, who is an admirer of Roberto Mancini from his playing days, is said to be trying to lure the current Lazio mentor to the club.

A few years ago when Mancini was still playing it was Moratti who tried very hard to get him to the San Siro.

Mancini is working wonders with Lazio, including a place in the UEFA Cup semi-finals, even though the club is experiencing a turbulent time off the field financially.

Meanwhile there is still speculation that Roma are interested in current Perugia coach Serse Cosmi. The cap wearing coach, who is into his third season at Perugia, is a very likeable character.

There is no doubt that Roma under the guidance of the great Fabio Capello are certainly not living up to expectations this season.

Capello though still has a contract with Roma until 2005 and Roma president, Franco Sensi, is quick to dismiss the rumours. Cosmi too has a contract linking him Perugia next year.

There is no doubt that Capello is the master of coaches having won everything possible and he too will not be satisfied this year.

Having won everything with AC Milan and then the Spanish Liga with Real Madrid, Capello has also taken Roma to some dizzy heights.

Roma under him won the Scudetto in 2001 and finished second last year. This year may just go down as a one-off occurrence.

Cosmi on the other hand was a little known Third Division coach before coaching Perugia and has become somewhat of a cult hero in recent years. Perugia are still an outside chance of reaching a place in the UEFA Cup.

Over at Juventus Marcello Lippi is said to have extended his contract at Turin but there is still talk that he will guide Italy and replace Giovanni Trapattoni over the summer.

The sooner Lippi takes over the reigns of the national team the better. Trapattoni is a dinosaur who is still in the pre-historic defensive days of catenaccio.

Lippi is a dynamic coach with an impeccable record with Juventus and he would be the breath of fresh air required at the national level these days.

Should Lippi take over the Azzurri then prodigal son, Gianluca Vialli, is the hot tip to guide Juventus. Vialli played five seasons with Juventus before moving to Chelsea in 1996 as a player.

Vialli's coaching record isn't that great but he did have stints both at Chelsea and Watford as coach. There was even talk some six months ago that he should be the Azzurri coach.

Vialli meanwhile is making the news because of his recent comments that neither David Beckham nor Michael Owen would ever go to Italy.

His judgment is based on the fact that Man Utd and Liverpool don't need the money and that the lifestyle is much better in England. This last one is interesting but then again each to his own.

Finally, on the subject of transfers, I am absolutely amazed that someone like Harry Kewell is said to be resigning with Leeds when clearly he has outgrown the club.

His talents would be wasted in Leeds and he has nothing more to prove in England. Kewell would be an outstanding success in Italy and the sooner he goes there the better.

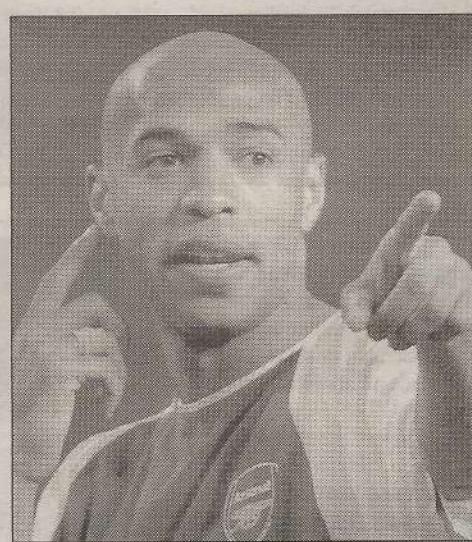
Despite all the glamour of the English Premier League, all the great players need to succeed in the Serie A. It is for this reason alone that the temptation for both Beckham and Owen to move might be too great.

CHELSEA FANS TARGET HENRY

The Football Association are set to investigate missile-throwing by Chelsea fans for the second time in a fortnight after Thierry Henry was hit by an object during his side's FA Cup quarter-final replay victory at Stamford Bridge.

Two plastic cigarette lighters were thrown at Henry as he celebrated

Arsenal's third goal in their 3-1 win to set up a semi-final meeting against Sheffield United at Old Trafford.



Arsenal star Thierry Henry was hit by an object during their clash against Chelsea last week.

Henry was also struck by a coin thrown by a Chelsea fan during his side's original FA Cup last-eight tie at Highbury last week.

Arsenal manager, Arsene Wenger, has called on the FA to find the culprit on camera, and said that missile throwing was ruining the spectacle.

"You cannot let that get into the game" he said.

VIALLI AMBITIOUS TO COACH THE AZZURRI

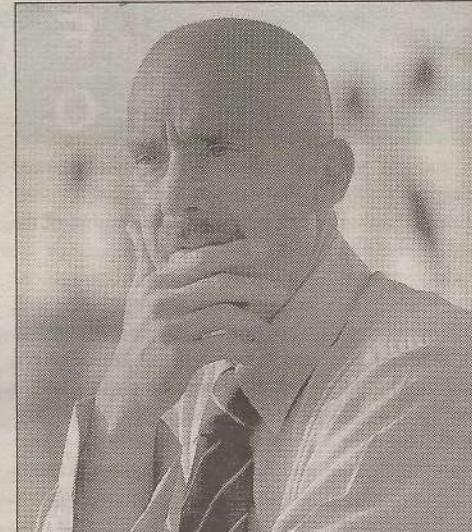
Gianluca Vialli has admitted he would relish the chance to coach the Italian national team but hopes current boss Giovanni Trapattoni is not forced out.

The pressure is mounting on the coach after a disappointing World Cup in 2002 and some poor displays in Euro 2004 qualifiers.

Although Vialli announced his desire to coach Italy, he said: "I am not waiting for Trapattoni's head to fall."

"I have gone through several experiences and know what is like to be told I will be released from the post before the end of the contract."

"I hope that if this happens later rather than sooner,



Gianluca Vialli has been linked with coaching the Italian squad.

my name is still linked with the post" he said.

The former World Cup player has managed Chelsea with success from 1998-2000 but has had a disappointing tenure with Division One club Watford.

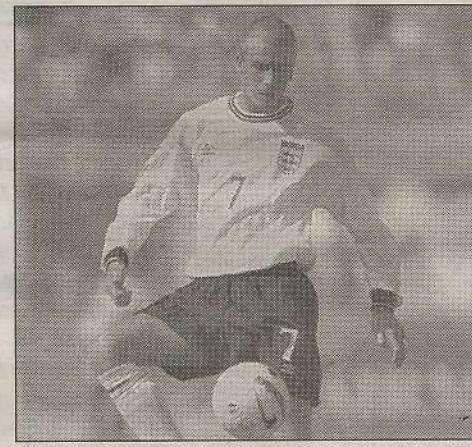
Other top Italian coaches have been linked with the Azzurri job such as Juventus boss Marcello Lippi and Chievo coach Luigi del Neri.

"If instead Lippi replaced Trap I would seriously consider coaching Juventus even if there are many who want to take that post," added Vialli.

SPANISH GIANT CHASING BECKHAM

England captain David Beckham could be a transfer target for Spanish giants Real Madrid. The club's managing director Jorge Valdano has described the Manchester United star as looking like "the next big project for us."

He said: "The way Real Madrid have pulled off the biggest transfer market coups of the last few seasons,



Real Madrid have been linked to signing Manchester United star David Beckham.

Beckham looks like the next big project for us."

The United midfielder has been linked with both Real and Inter Milan over recent weeks.

Despite the talk, Beckham signed a new, lucrative contract with United last year which takes him through to 2005 at Old Trafford.

JEAN TIGANA TO LEAVE FULHAM

Jean Tigana is set to leave Fulham in the summer after the club announced his contract would not be extended beyond the end of the season.

In a personal letter to the manager, chairman Mohamed Fayed, wrote: "Our position in the Premier League both this year and last year has been disappointing, particularly given the degree of investment and resources provided."

Assistant manager Christian Damiano and fitness coach Roger Propos will also leave the London club.

TRANSFER TALK HAS BEGUN

The following transfer rumours have begun circulating across Europe:

Thomas Sorensen-Sunderland to Arsenal Pablo Aimar- Valencia to Manchester United Nihat Kahveci- Real Sociedad to Manchester United Joaquin- Real Betis to Real Madrid Christian Chivu- Ajax Amsterdam to Arsenal Walter Samuel- Roma to Real Madrid Daniele Bonera- Parma to AC Milan Kleberson- Atletico Paranaense to Roma Damian Duff- Blackburn Rovers to Liverpool.



Valencia star Pablo Aimar has been linked with a possible move to Manchester United next season?

ENGLISH ODYSSEY

Stuart Jones

Welcome back to another week of football from England.

No on field action in the Premier League last weekend as the clubs took a back seat for international action in Europe.

A powerful header from Michael Owen and a trade mark David Beckham freekick were enough to give England a 2-0 victory away in Liechtenstein. The win put the English two points behind group leaders Turkey and four points clear of third place.

Mohamed Al Fayed has quit Britain and moved to Switzerland after losing a case to keep his tax status in the UK. Although unable to attend as many Fulham games as he would like he will retain ownership and continue to fund their exploits.

Just how much this will be and

where they will eventually play is all up in the air though.

The transfer deadline for the football league passed last Friday and there was plenty of action in the lower leagues. Herman Hreidarsson departed Ipswich for Charlton for 800000 pounds. Former Spirit player Ben Burgess departed Stockport County for Hull City for 100000 pounds.

Leon Best and Tom Youngs made 50000 pound moves to Southampton and Northampton respectively. A lot of moves in free transfers including Scott McDonald leaving Southampton for near neighbours AFC Bournemouth. Abe Akinbiyi and Luke Chadwick are two of the bigger names making loan moves to Stoke and Reading. Paul Warhurst also has gone from

Bolton to be loaned out to Stoke City.

With calls for Mark McGhee to go to Millwall there is much speculation that Teddy Sheringham would replace him as player coach. Sheringham has come out this week and emphatically denied this. Sheringham is 37 and is out of contract for Spurs at the end of the week. Knowing Spurs recent form with strikers they will probably release him despite needing goals!

Another who says he is staying is Leeds' Paul Robinson. The Yorkshire keeper has denied he will be making a big money move to Arsenal in the off season. Meanwhile Harry Kewell has stated that Terry Venables is the best manager he has ever had, rating him higher than George Graham, David Oleary or Frank

Farina.

One player who is interested in a move to Highbury is Turkish goal keeper Rustu Recber. The 29 is off contract at seasons end and stated this week that he would love to play for a big club in Europe like Arsenal although he also stated nothing was set in stone as of yet.

Gary Megson has been told his job is safe even though the Baggies are favourite for the drop. Chairman Jeremy Peace compared the position of the club when Megson first came on board, relegation to the second division looked a big possibility, and says that Megson is the man for the club going forward. Meanwhile at Leeds Peter Reid is starting to win over the doubters with his personal approach to his critics. His straight talking has

been appreciated by influential fans who had initially wanted Brian Kidd to take over for the short term.

Finally news from Arsenal this week is that Robert Pires and Patrick Vieira have been told to lower their wage demands or they may well be released. With the new stadium being built costing 300 million pounds that will cut a hole in Arsene Wenger's transfer fund as well as his ability to keep his current squad together.

Peter Hill Wood has stated he is not risking the clubs financial future on the basis of players continuing to push for outlandish wage requests. It could be an interesting summer for the Gunners.

Have a great week and enjoy your football from England.



EURO 2004 - WRAP



FRANCE MALTA

6
0

Two goals apiece from Thierry Henry and Zinedine Zidane helped France to their fourth successive victory in their EURO 2004 qualifying campaign as they easily overcame Malta.

Jacques Santini's selection suggested that he is beginning to stamp his own mark on the French team with a new-look central defensive partnership of Mikael Silvestre and William Gallas, Sochaux's midfielder Benoit Pedretti alongside

Claude Makelele in midfield and Zidane sporting the captain's armband. Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez earned a yellow card in the first minute for a heavy challenge outside the area.

France proceeded to lay siege to the Maltese goal for much of the opening half, and established some rhythm with Sylvain Wiltord, Makelele and Trezeguet going close in quick succession before the half-hour.

The deadlock was broken after

37 minutes when Wiltord showed great control from Zidane's corner before blasting into the roof of the net.

Thierry Henry then scored moments later after combining with Pedretti. The pattern continued in the second half and France scored their third after 53 minutes with a bullet header from Henry. Two minutes later it was 4-0 with captain Zidane slotting home a penalty after a foul on Bixente Lizarazu.

France scored again after 70 minutes with Henry this time the provider.

A brilliant turn and run from halfway took the Arsenal striker clear on the right and he pulled the ball across goal for Trezeguet to finish easily at the far post.

The French continued to press, albeit with less urgency, and Zidane headed his second goal of the match to complete the scoring after 80 minutes.

"I think we produced a high-quality match," Santini said. "Zidane was very good and we were not troubled after the first two goals. More importantly, we kept on playing and scoring goals."

There was a big crowd today and

I think we've pleased the 40,000 people who were here."

FINAL SCORE: FRANCE 6
(Wiltord 36', Henry 38', 54', Zidane 57', 81', Trezeguet 70')
MALTA 0.

LINE-UPS:

FRANCE: Barthez, Thuram (Sagnol 65'), Gallas, Silvestre, Lizarazu, Makelele, Pedretti, Zidane, Wiltord (Govou 75'), Henry (Rothen 80'), Trezeguet.

MALTA: Muscat, Ciantar, Mamo (Chetcuti 71'), Carabott, Said, Dimech, Bogdanovic (Turner 62'), Vella, Miguel, Mifsud, Mallia, Nwoko.

Referee: Emil BOZINOVSKI (MKD).



France maestro Zinedine Zidane scored two goals against a hapless Malta in their qualifier.

NETHERLANDS CZECH REPUBLIC

1
1

These two sides, joint leaders of a section that also includes Austria, Moldova and Belarus, came into this game with something to prove after failing to reach the 2002 World Cup.

The Czech Republic were fresh from a friendly victory over France in Paris, while Dutch winger Andy van der Meyde was absent through injury. Clarence Seedorf rattled the right hand post as early as the 4th minute for the Netherlands, who had

Manchester United's Ruud Van Nistelrooy in inspiring form.

The home side held the majority of possession in the first half, but the Czech team, led by Pavel Nedved, were a constant threat on the counter-attack. In the

42nd minute, the Czech goalkeeper came to the aid of his teammates when he blocked a Frank De Boer header after some positive lead up play. But he was helpless in the first minute of stoppage time at the end of the first half, when Van Nistelrooy

capitalised on an excellent cross from the left by Edgar Davids to head home the opening goal.

In an even match, the Dutch deserved to enter the half-time break in the lead due to the chances created.

The Czech Republic began the second half with intent, as they pressed for the equaliser. The introduction of young Liverpool striker, Milan Baros, in the place of playmaker Tomas Rosicky, made all the difference, and his support of giant forward, Jan

Koller, was crucial to the Czech Republic's chances. After only a minute on the pitch, Baros made a break to the goal line and cut the ball back for his strike partner, who made no mistake from close distance.

The Netherlands tried in vain to restore their lead, and both Kluivert and Van Nistelrooy saw their headers flash wide later in the second half. Baros was forced to leave the field to receive medical attention after a cut above his left ear led to excessive bleeding.

The Czech Republic were able to hold on for the point, which keeps them level with the Dutch at the top of the qualifying group.



Manchester United's Ruud Van Nistelrooy was at it again for his national side in the 1-1 draw with Czech Republic.

FINAL SCORE:
NETHERLANDS 1 (Van Nistelrooy 45') **CZECH REPUBLIC 1** (Koller 68').

LINE-UPS:

NETHERLANDS: Waterreus, Ricksen, Stam, De Boer, Van Bronckhorst (Van Der Vaart 40'), Seedorf, Van Bommel, Davids, Zenden, Van Nistelrooy (Makaay 81'), Kluivert. **CZECH REPUBLIC:** Cech, Grygera, Ujfaluksi, Galasek, Bolf, Jankulovski, Smicer (Jiranek 79'), Rosicky (Baros 68'), Nedved, Poborsky, Koller (Lokvenc 88').

Referee: Kim Milton NIELSEN (DEN).

GERMANY LITHUANIA

1
1

World Cup finalist, Germany slipped to second in their qualifying group after a disappointing 1-1 draw with Lithuania in Nurnberg. Rudi Voller's side had defeated Lithuania 2-0 in the reverse fixture, but were missing a number of key players.

Michael Ballack was ruled out with an ankle injury, Jens Jeremies was missing with a knee injury and Christoph Metzelder had an Achilles problem.

After a sluggish start, the Germans quickly settled, and took the lead in the 8th minute. In what

was a well-worked goal, Bernd Schneider controlled a cross from the right and played the ball across to Jorg Bohme.

Midfielder Carsten Ramelow was on hand to backheel Bohme's shot into the net to give the supporters good reason to celebrate.

The Lithuanian goalkeeper, Stause, was kept busy in the first half, and made some crucial interventions from German corners.

The aerial capacity of Klose and Bobic up front was a constant menace.

However, the Baltic side began to recover from this early setback, and

Ramelow was forced into clearing the ball from his own line. Despite holding most of the possession, Germany failed to impose themselves in midfield, and the Lithuanian players made good use of the pitch with their counter-attacks.

The second half began with some promise for Germany, but determined and disciplined defending held them out.

In the 71st minute, the home supporters began to celebrate a second goal which was disallowed.

Bobic's ball across the goal was turned into an empty net by Klose,

who was ruled offside.

The disallowed goal haunted Germany, and two minutes later they were pegged back to 1-1. Razanauskas received the ball outside the penalty area and punished some sloppy defending as he turned past a defender to find himself one on one with Oliver Kahn. The striker kept his composure to score a valuable equaliser.

The goal sparked both teams into action, and spurred on by a noisy crowd, Germany went close a number of times in the final ten minutes of play.

But Lithuania, as they had done all match, provided some moments of anxiety for German supporters, and Mikalajunas saw his shot punched clear by Kahn.

After six minutes of added time, the referee blew the whistle on a

disappointing night for the three time European champions, and Lithuania were able to celebrate a famous and well deserved draw.

FINAL SCORE:
GERMANY 1 (Ramelow 7')
LITHUANIA 1 (Razanauskas 72').

LINE-UPS:

GERMANY: Kahn, Friedrich, Rau (Fretz 82'), Worns, Ramelow, Hamann, Frings, Bohme (Rehmer 46'), Bobic (Kuranyi 71'), Schneider, Klose.

LITHUANIA: Stause, Semberas,

Dedura, Barasa, Petrenko (Dzauktas 86'), Zvirgzdukas, Morinas, Mikalajunas, Jankauskas (Fomenko 90'), Razanauskas, Pukelevicius.

Referee: Victor Jose



The Lithuanian team rejoice after they surprised Germany away from home with a well fought 1-1 draw.

SCOTLAND ICELAND

2
1

Scotland were deserved winners against Iceland in a vital Group 5 qualifier at Hampden Park. Goals from Kenny Miller and defender Lee Wilkie sandwiched an Eidur Gudjohnsen strike for Iceland to increase the gap between the countries to four points in the table.

The result leaves Scotland in the driving seat to finish second and reach the play-offs. Iceland will feel unfortunate not to have taken anything from the game,

especially after Dutch referee Rene Temmink awarded an indirect free-kick inside the box after Steven Pressley appeared to foul Gudjohnsen.

The hosts opened the scoring in the eleventh minute. Crawford held the ball up superbly before sending Graham Alexander scampering down the right and his cross was superbly turned past Arason by Miller. Don Hutchison appealed for a penalty in the 33rd minute when he appeared to be tugged in the box by Arnar

Vidasson but the referee waved the claims away. Iceland levelled the scores three minutes after the interval. A long ball forward by Johannes Gudjonsson caught Scotland defender Pressley napping and Chelsea forward Gudjohnsen raced clear to lift the ball over the advancing Robert Douglas.

The visitors almost grabbed the lead just seconds later when Johannes Gudjonsson set up Eidur Gudjohnsen, this time for a header, which trickled just past the

post to the relief of the static Scotland defence.

Then came that bizarre moment when Pressley appeared to foul Gudjohnsen just inside the box yet the referee blew for an indirect free-kick claiming obstruction by the defender. Scotland recovered their composure and Barry Ferguson came close in the 59th minute with a stunning effort which skimmed the frame of the goal.

The Scots scored what proved to be the winner in the 70th minute. Alexander's free-kick released substitute Paul Devlin on the right-hand side and his pinpoint cross was met by Wilkie, whose towering header sailed into the net.



Scottish players celebrate the winner in the second half of the game against Iceland at Hampden Park.

FINAL SCORE:
SCOTLAND 2 (Miller 11', Wilkie 70') **ICELAND 1** (Gudjohnsen 48'). **LINE-UPS:**

SCOTLAND: Douglas, Alexander, Wilkie, Dally, Pressley, Ferguson, Crawford, Lambert, Miller (McNamara 82'), Hutchison (Davidson 66'), Naysmith.

ICELAND: Arason, Thorsteinsson, Sigurdsson, Kristinsson, Ingimarsson, Gudjonsson, Gretarsson. **Referee:** Rene Temmink (HOL).



EURO 2004 - WRAP



LIECHENSTEIN ENGLAND

0
2

England restored their challenge for an automatic qualifying berth for the European Championships after overcoming an edgy start to beat Liechtenstein 2-0 on Saturday.

Following a 2-2 home draw against Macedonia in their previous Group 7 qualifier, England needed to rediscover their winning ways and a first-half Michael Owen header, along with a trademark free-kick from captain David Beckham eight minutes after the interval, secured a workmanlike victory.

The result consolidated

England's hold on second place in the section's standings with seven points from three games, two behind leaders Turkey.

England face Turkey on Wednesday in a match that may go a long way to deciding the outcome of the group.

Playing in front of a capacity crowd of 3,548 inside the Rheinstadion in Vaduz, Liechtenstein began brightly. Verona's Mario Frick sent a volley narrowly wide and the winger then had another sharp shot saved by goalkeeper David James as the

hosts, who have won only one competitive international, threatened to open the scoring.

England struggled to inject any fluidity into their play but did take the lead after 28 minutes following their best move of the opening period.

Beckham found Emile Heskey on the right and the Liverpool striker crossed for his club team-mate Owen who headed powerfully into the net for his 20th goal for England on his 46th appearance.

The visitors' dominance continued after half-time and a second

goal duly arrived on 53 minutes, when Beckham beat the Liechtenstein defensive wall and goalkeeper with a superb curling 20-metre free kick.

It was the Manchester United winger's tenth goal for England and his last telling contribution before he was withdrawn, with 20 minutes remaining, and replaced by Danny Murphy. Liechtenstein almost grabbed a late consolation but Thomas Beck had a shot headed off the line and midfielder Martin Stocklasa stretched to hit a volley against a post.

England held on to take maximum points, leaving coach Sven-Göran Eriksson to remark: "At least there were the three points, it was a professional, good job. Maybe a lack of concentration - in the last ten

to 15 minutes we gave them a couple of chances, we shouldn't have done. But it was a good three points and a secure win."

FINAL SCORE:
LIECHENSTEIN 0 ENG-
LAND 2 (Owen 28', Beckham 53').

LINE-UPS:
LIECHENSTEIN: Jehle,
Telser, D'Elia, Hasler, Stocklasa,
Stocklasa, Zech (Burgmeier 76'),
Büchel (Beck 86'), Beck, Frick
(Nigg 82'), Gerster.

ENGLAND: James, G. Neville,
Bridge, Gerrard (Butt 66'),
Ferdinand, Southgate, Beckham
(Murphy 70'), Scholes, Heskey
(Rooney 80'), Owen, Dyer.

Referee: Georgios KAS-
NAFERIS (GRE).



Michael Owen opened the scoring for England in a surprising low scoring match against Liechtenstein.

ITALY FINLAND

2
0

Italy revived their qualifying hopes with a 2-0 win against Finland in Palermo to ease the pressure on coach Giovanni Trapattoni.

Christian Vieri scored twice in the first half against a subdued visiting side, who were without injured captain Jari Litmanen, to move ahead of Serbia and Montenegro in second place in Group 9 - five points behind Wales. With Del Piero and Inzaghi both injured, Vieri was Italy's spearhead, with Delvecchio, Totti and Camoranesi forming an attacking trio behind him. The Finnish defence were vulnerable to pace out wide and long

balls through the middle.

Gianluigi Buffon's goal was barely threatened during the course of the match. After five minutes, Italy took the lead after AS Roma duo Totti and Delvecchio sliced an exchange of passes through the Finnish defence. Totti then played the ball square to Vieri who could not miss from close range. The goal was the signal for blue shirts to pour forward in increasing numbers. Totti blasted a free-kick over the crossbar, Delvecchio had a shot blocked and Vieri forced a magnificent one-handed save out of goalkeeper Antti Niemi.

On 22 minutes Italy went further

ahead thanks to a swift counterattack. Excellent perseverance from Janne Saarinen down the left won a corner for Finland, but the Italians cleared quickly into the path of Totti whose wonderful pass released Vieri who was waiting, outside, by the halfway line. The Inter Milan forward had a metre or so start on the Finnish defenders and raced all the way into the penalty area before lifting the ball over the advancing Niemi to double his side's lead and register his 17th goal for his country.

After such a scintillating opening the rest of the game was somewhat anti-climactic with the main interest

surrounding whether Vieri would complete his hat-trick. He certainly had the chances to, but he dragged a shot wide on 29 minutes after a smart Camoranesi pass and stumbled three minutes after that when Totti unselfishly played the ball back to him in the box.

The second half began with a minor Finnish rally that saw Sami Hyppiä head wide. However Italy remained the more dangerous of the two sides, particularly when Delvecchio and Totti were on the ball.

On 55 minutes Delvecchio's smart pass allowed Vieri to bear down on goal yet again, but he took the ball too wide and his scuffed shot deflected via Tihinen into the arms of Niemi. Three minutes later another swift counterattack ended with Delvecchio crossing the ball to Totti whose sweeping shot rebounded off the post.

On 67 minutes Delvecchio released

Totti who cut inside one defender and then, as he shaped to shoot, fell over the trailing leg of Saarinen.

The referee waved away penalty appeals and thereafter Italy seemed to resign themselves to a two-goal victory.

FINAL SCORE:
ITALY 2 (Vieri 5', 22') FIN-
LAND 0.

LINE-UPS:
ITALY: Buffon, Panucci, Nesta,
Cannavaro, Zambrotta, Zanetti,
Perrotta, Camoranesi, Del Vecchio
(Birindelli 68'), Totti (Miccoli 86'),
Vieri (Corradi 82').

FINLAND: Niemi, Pasanen,
Saarinen, Hyppiä, Tihinen, Riihilahti
(Johansson 36'), Nurmela (Kopteff
75'), Iila, Forssell, Tainio, Kolkka.

Referee: Valentin IVANOV
(RUS).



Christian Vieri is mobbed by teammates as he single handedly destroyed Finland's resistance with 2 goals in the first 22 minutes.

GROUP 1						
Teams	P	W	D	L	S	A Pts
France	4	4	0	0	17	1 12
Israel	2	1	1	0	3	1 4
Cyprus	3	1	1	1	4	4 4
Slovenia	2	1	0	1	3	5 3
Malta	5	0	0	5	1	17 0
RESULTS						
Cyprus 1 - 2 France, Slovenia 3 - 0						
Malta, Malta 0 - 2 Israel, France 5 - 0						
Slovenia, Malta 0 - 4 France, Cyprus 2 - 1 Malta, Cyprus 1 - 1 Israel, France 6 - 0 Malta.						

02/04/03 Slovenia-Cyprus
02/04/03 Israel-France
30/04/03 Malta-Slovenia
30/04/03 Israel-Cyprus
07/06/03 Israel-Slovenia
07/06/03 Malta-Cyprus
06/09/03 France-Cyprus
10/09/03 Israel-Malta
10/09/03 Slovenia-France
11/10/03 Cyprus-Slovenia
11/10/03 France-Israel

GROUP 2

Teams	P	W	D	L	S	A Pts
Denmark	3	2	1	0	9	4 7
Norway	3	2	1	0	5	2 7
Romania	4	2	0	2	12	6 6
Bos-Herz.	3	1	0	2	2	5 3
Luxembourg	3	0	0	3	0	11 0
RESULTS						
Norway 2 - 2 Denmark, Bosnia-Herzegovina 0 - 3 Romania, Denmark 2 - 0 Luxembourg, Romania 0 - 1						
Norway, Norway 2 - 0 Bosnia-Herzegovina, Luxembourg 0 - 7						
Romania, Romania 2 - 5 Denmark, Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 - 0 Luxembourg.						

FIXTURES

02/04/03 Denmark-Bosnia-Herzegovina
02/04/03 Luxembourg-Norway

07/06/03 Romania-Bosnia-Herzegovina

07/06/03 Denmark-Norway

11/06/03 Luxembourg-Denmark

11/06/03 Norway-Romania

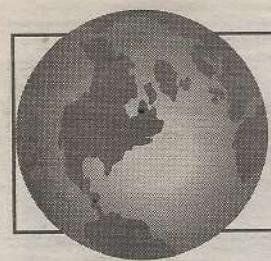
02/04/03 Denmark-Bosnia-Herzegovina
02/04/03 Luxembourg-Norway

07/06/03 Romania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
07/06/03 Denmark-Norway

11/06/03 Luxembourg-Denmark

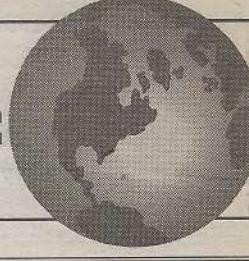
11/06/03 Norway-Romania

11/06/03 Luxembourg-Denmark



ABSW

WORLD



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

PREMIER LEAGUE
- TABLES -

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	31	20	6	5	66	33	66
Man Utd	31	19	7	5	51	27	64
Newcastle	31	19	4	8	54	35	61
Chelsea	31	15	9	7	57	31	54
Liverpool	31	14	10	7	47	31	52
Everton	31	14	8	9	39	36	50
Charlton	31	13	7	11	40	39	46
Blackburn	31	12	10	9	38	37	46
Southampton	31	11	11	9	34	32	44
Tottenham	30	12	7	11	43	43	43
Middlesbrough	31	11	9	11	39	35	42
Man City	31	12	5	14	40	49	41
Fulham	31	10	8	13	35	40	38
Aston Villa	31	10	6	15	33	37	36
Birmingham	31	9	8	14	28	42	35
Leeds	31	10	4	17	38	45	34
West Ham	31	7	9	15	34	53	30
Bolton	30	6	11	13	33	47	29
West Brom	31	5	6	20	21	47	21
Sunderland	31	4	7	20	19	50	19

FIXTURES

SATURDAY 5 APRIL

Man Utd	v	Liverpool
Aston Villa	v	Arsenal
Bolton Wanderers	v	Man City
Charlton Athletic	v	Leeds Utd
Middlesbrough	v	West Bromwich Albion
Southampton	v	West Ham Utd
Sunderland	v	Chelsea
Tottenham Hotspur	v	Birmingham City

SUNDAY 6 APRIL

Everton	v	Newcastle Utd
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MONDAY 7 APRIL

Fulham	v	Blackburn Rovers
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TOP SCORERS

20	James Beattie (Southampton)
19	Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
16	Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
15	Ruud van Nistelrooy (Man Utd)
13	Michael Owen (Liverpool)
12	Tomasz Radzinski (Everton)
	Gianfranco Zola (Chelsea)
	Nicolas Anelka (Man City)
11	Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Chelsea)
10	Harry Kewell (Leeds)
	Mark Viduka (Leeds)
	Robert Pires (Arsenal)
	Teddy Sheringham (Tottenham)



Southampton's James Beattie currently leads the Premier League's top scorers charts with 20 goals for the season.

FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portsmouth	39	24	11	4	82	37	83
Leicester	39	23	11	5	64	35	80
Sheff Utd	37	20	8	9	59	39	68
Reading	39	21	4	14	49	38	67
Nottn Forest	38	18	11	9	69	37	65
Wolverhampton	39	17	12	10	68	38	63
Ipswich	39	15	13	11	61	49	58
Norwich	38	15	10	13	50	41	55
Wimbledon	38	14	11	13	63	62	53
Gillingham	38	14	11	13	50	56	53
Rotherham	39	14	10	15	55	53	52
Preston	38	13	12	13	60	57	51
Crystal Palace	38	12	14	12	49	43	50
Millwall	39	14	8	17	45	59	50
Burnley	37	13	10	14	54	66	49
Coventry	39	12	11	16	42	52	47
Watford	38	13	8	17	39	55	47
Bradford	38	12	10	16	45	58	46
Walsall	39	12	7	20	50	63	43
Derby	39	12	7	20	46	62	43
Stoke	39	8	13	18	38	64	37
Grimsby	39	9	10	20	44	73	37
Brighton	39	9	9	21	40	59	36
Sheff Wed	39	6	13	20	38	64	31

SECOND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wigan	39	25	11	3	60	23	86
Crewe	39	22	8	9	70	36	74
Cardiff	38	21	10	7	59	33	73
Oldham	39	19	13	7	54	31	70
Bristol City	39	20	9	10	65	41	69
QPR	39	18	10	11	57	42	64
Tranmere	39	17	10	12	52	53	61
Luton	39	16	10	13	56	53	58
Blackpool	39	15	11	13	50	49	56
Plymouth	39	14	12	13	55	46	54
Swindon	39	13	11	15	53	55	50
Wycombe	39	13	10	16	56	54	49
Colchester	39	12	13	14	47	49	49
Barnsley	39	11	13	15	46	55	46
Brentford	39	12	10	17	38	48	46
Chesterfield	39	13	7	19	39	57	46
Notts County	39	10	15	14	54	62	45
Stockport	39	11	9	19	51	62	42
Port Vale	39	11	9	19	43	60	42
Peterborough	38	9	13	16	37	49	40
Cheltenham	39	9	13	17	43	60	40
Mansfield	39	11	7	21	57	78	40
Northampton	39	10	8	21	35	60	38
Huddersfield	39	9	10	20	29	50	37

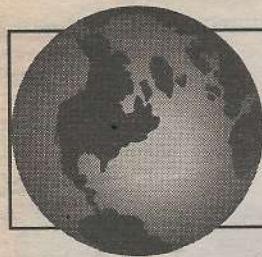
ITALIAN SERIE A



- TABLES -

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Juventus	26	17	6	3	49	18	57
2. Internazionale	26	17	3	6	53	29	54
3. Milan	26	15	7	4	46	20	52
4. Lazio	26	11	12	3	45	27	45
5. Parma	26	11	9	6	45	29	42
6. Chievo	26	12	5	9	34	28	41
7. Udinese	26	11	6	9	27	27	39
8. Roma	26	9	8	9	40	34	35</td

WORLD



BELGIAN EESTEKLASSE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Club Brugge	26	22	1	3	81	26	67
2. Anderlecht	26	18	2	6	59	28	56
3. Lokeren	26	17	4	5	60	35	55
4. Lierse	26	16	7	3	45	23	55
5. Genk	26	14	6	6	61	39	48
6. St-Truiden	26	14	6	6	54	33	48
7. Standard	26	11	7	8	43	32	40
8. Gent	26	12	2	12	40	42	38
9. Mons	26	11	3	12	36	32	36
10. La Louvière	26	8	7	11	29	32	31
11. Mouscron	26	8	5	13	37	53	29
12. Westerlo	26	8	3	15	23	41	27
13. Antwerp	26	7	5	14	35	48	26
14. Beveren	26	8	2	16	32	63	26
15. Lommel	26	7	3	16	28	48	24
16. G Beerschot	26	6	4	16	37	48	22
17. Charleroi	26	5	6	15	30	56	21
18. Mechelen	26	3	5	18	18	69	14

FIXTURES

SATURDAY APRIL 5, 2003

La Louvière v Standard
Lommel v Gent
Lokeren v Mouscron
Club Brugge v Mons
Beveren v Mechelen

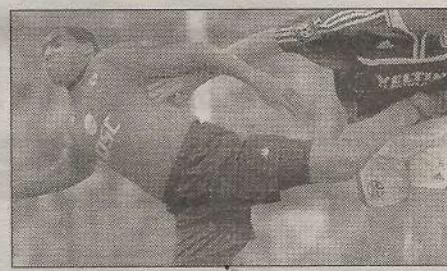


Genk's Wesley Sonck continues to lead the Belgian First Division scorer's charts.

Nurnberg v Schalke
Bochum v Kaiserslautern
Hansa Rostock v Wolfsburg

TOP SCORERS

Goncalves Ailton (Werder Bremen)
Kevin Kuranyi (VfB Stuttgart)
Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)
Thomas Christiansen (Bochum)
Fredi Bobic (Hannover)
Markus Schroth (1860 Munich)
Claudio Pizarro (Bayern Munich)
Henrique Ewerthon (Borussia Dortmund)
Benjamin Lauth (1860 Munich)
Sasa Ceric (Nurnberg)
Marcelo Marcellino (Hertha Berlin)



Brazilian striker and Bundesliga top scorer Goncalves Ailton shown in action for Werder Bremen against Schalke.

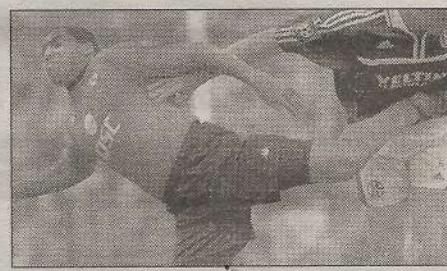
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	26	19	5	2	57	16	62
Borussia Dortmund	26	13	8	5	41	20	47
VfB Stuttgart	26	13	7	6	40	29	46
Hertha Berlin	26	12	6	8	40	27	42
Hamburg	26	11	7	8	32	32	40
Schalke	26	9	12	5	36	30	39
Werder Bremen	26	11	4	11	40	40	37
Wolfsburg	26	10	5	11	31	33	35
1860 Munich	26	9	7	10	33	41	34
Hannover	26	9	5	12	37	47	32
Kaiserslautern	26	8	7	11	34	34	31
Arminia Bielefeld	26	7	10	9	29	32	31
Hansa Rostock	26	8	7	11	27	32	31
Bochum	26	8	6	12	40	47	30
Bor M'gladbach	26	8	5	13	28	36	29
Nurnberg	26	8	4	14	30	45	28
Bayer Leverkusen	26	7	6	13	32	42	27
Energie Cottbus	26	6	5	15	26	50	23

FIXTURES

SATURDAY APRIL 5, 2003

Bayer Leverkusen v Hertha Berlin
Borussia Dortmund v Werder Bremen
Energie Cottbus v VfB Stuttgart
Hamburg v Arminia Bielefeld
Hannover v Bayern Munich



Brazilian striker and Bundesliga top scorer Goncalves Ailton shown in action for Werder Bremen against Schalke.

DUTCH EREDIVISIE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV	25	21	3	1	63	11	66
2. Ajax	25	17	5	3	62	24	56
3. Feyenoord	25	17	4	4	68	29	55
4. Roda	25	11	7	7	39	33	40
5. Waalwijk	25	12	4	9	31	31	40
6. Utrecht	25	9	9	7	33	29	36
7. NEC	25	10	6	9	31	33	36
8. NAC	25	8	11	6	28	22	35
9. Alkmaar	25	10	5	10	39	53	35
10. Willem II	25	9	6	10	36	34	33
11. Heerenveen	25	8	7	10	40	42	31
12. Twente	25	7	9	9	28	37	30
13. Roosendaal	25	8	5	12	28	37	29
14. Groningen	25	5	7	13	24	36	22
15. Vitesse	25	5	5	15	23	40	20
16. Zwolle	25	5	5	15	21	52	20
17. Excelsior	25	4	7	14	28	48	19
18. De Graafschap	25	4	5	16	24	55	17

FIXTURES

SATURDAY APRIL 5, 2003

Vitesse v Groningen
Twente v NAC
Heerenveen v Roda
De Graafschap v Feyenoord

SUNDAY 6 APRIL, 2003



Yugoslav Mateja Kezman has continued his rich scoring vein and tops the scoring charts in the Netherlands with 24 goals.

TOP SCORERS

Mateja Kezman (PSV Eindhoven)
Pierre van Hooijdonk (Feyenoord Rotterdam)
Thomas Buffel (Feyenoord Rotterdam)
Dirk Kuijt (Utrecht)
Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Ajax Amsterdam)
Rick Hoogendorp (RKC Waalwijk)
Barry van Galen (AZ Alkmaar)
Rafael van der Vaart (Ajax Amsterdam)
Tom Soetaers (Roda JC Kerkrade)
Ahmed Hossam Mido (Ajax Amsterdam)



Yugoslav Mateja Kezman has continued his rich scoring vein and tops the scoring charts in the Netherlands with 24 goals.

TOP SCORERS

Westerlo v Genk
SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2003
St-Truiden-Charleroi
Germinal Beerschot v Antwerp
Lierse v Anderlecht

TOP SCORERS

Wesley Sonck (Genk)
Roussel (Bergen)
Patrick Goots (Antwerp)
Stein Huysegems (Lierse)
Alexandros Kaklamanos (Gent)
Paul Kpaka (Germinal Beerschot)
Aarst (Standard Liege)
Desire Mbonabucya (St. Truiden)
Seol Ki-Hyeon (Anderlecht)
De Beule (Lokeren)
Vangeel (St. Truiden)
Gert Verheyen (Club Brugge)

Genk's Wesley Sonck continues to lead the Belgian First Division scorer's charts.

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Monaco	31	15	10	6	49	24	55
2. Marseille	31	16	7	8	34	27	55
3. Lyon	31	15	9	7	53	35	54
4. Bordeaux	31	14	9	8	42	29	51
5. Sochaux	31	13	10	8	35	28	49
6. Nantes	31	14	7	10	34	29	49
7. PSG	31	13	9	9	44	30	48
8. Nice	31	11	13	7	33	24	46
9. Auxerre	30	12	9	9	28	26	45
10. Lens	31	14	7	7	35	27	44
11. Bastia	31	12	8	11	33	34	44
12. Guingamp	31	13	4	14	42	44	43
13. Strasbourg	31	9	10	12	33	43	37
14. Le Havre	31	9	8	14	23	36	35
15. Lille	31	8	9	14	26	41	33
16. Rennes	31	8	8	15	24	34	32

Finals Action



(Left) Simon Colosimo and Ahmed Elrich go toe to toe at Parramatta Stadium



(top) Jamie Harnwell shows us his fly kick against Power



(Top) John Buonavoglia in the wars against Glory



Heads up for Alvin Cecalli and Bobby Despotovski



High Flyer Liam Reddy in goals against Perth Glory



By Carlos Furtado